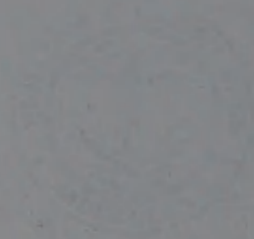


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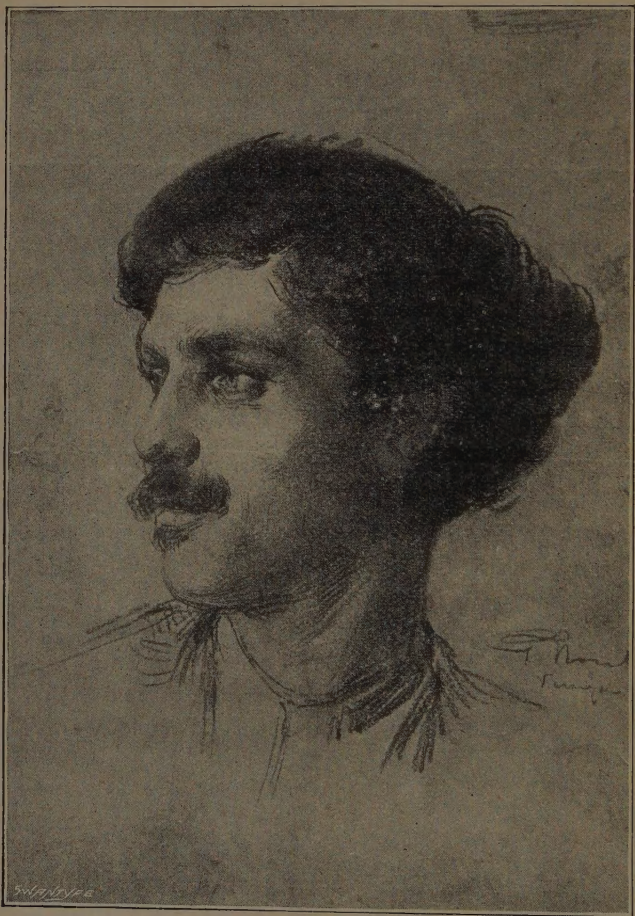


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ANTONIO, GONDOLIER

IN AND AROUND VENICE

BY

HORATIO F. BROWN

AUTHOR OF

"VENICE: AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE REPUBLIC"
AND "LIFE ON THE LAGOONS"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK
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PREFACE

THIS volume is intended to be a companion to
Life on the Lagoons.

Several of the chapters appeared originally in the first edition of that book, but were omitted, for various reasons, in the second. The public has, however, been so kind to *Life on the Lagoons* that I venture to hope it may care to possess again the papers which were left out.

I have added some chapters on a few of the less known places in the neighbourhood which may be of use to those who wish to see what the mainland is like.

The first chapter appeared in *Venetian Studies*, now out of print. It was written in 1887, and in some cases reference is made to places which no longer exist. I have let these few passages stand as records of what once was, but have noted the changes at the foot of the page.

The rest of the volume has never appeared in book form.

HORATIO F. BROWN.

CA' TORRESELLA,
VENICE, 1905.

THE chapter on the Campanile of Saint Mark was published in *The Architectural Review*, the chapter on "Knockers" in *The Magazine of Art*. My thanks are due to the proprietors for leave to reprint them.

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INTRODUCTORY

VENICE

SO much has been written, and is being written daily, about Venice from the picturesque point of view, that one is tempted to cry "Enough," to declare that the subject is exhausted for the present. Such, however, is not the case. For some reasons, which we will presently try to indicate, the fascination which the sea-girt city exercises over her devotees is inexhaustible. The lover returns to the contemplation of his mistress with ardour ever new; he resumes the endless task of cataloguing her charms, only to find that having said all, he has not said enough. The truth is that we must number Venice among the "cities of the soul"; she ranks with Oxford, Rome, Siena, Prague; she has the fatal gift to touch the imagination, to awaken a permanent desire. Of course I do not mean that every one feels thus about Venice. I cannot forget, when the floods of 1882 had destroyed the exits from the city, that row of discontented Englishmen who lined the hall

of one hotel, cursing the place and glowering at the porter as though he were responsible for the down-pour on the Alps. For these the language of the Venice-lover must seem as the crackling of thorns under the pot, like sheer moon-madness; but they are always at liberty to keep away, to read nothing that bears the name of Venice, not so much as to have heard whether there be a Venice or no.

Perhaps the æsthetic quality which most emphatically belongs to the Venetian landscape, the quality wherein resides the secret of her charm, is infinite variety. As a proof of this assertion, I would adduce the fact that no one is quite satisfied with what others write or say about the city, is not satisfied with what he says himself; something is said, but not all—part of the truth, but not the whole truth. The aspects of Venice are as various, as manifold as the hues held in solution upon her waters beneath a scirocco sky. There is a perpetual miracle of change; one day is not like another, one hour varies from the next; there is no stable outline, such as one finds among the mountains, no permanent vista, as in a view across a plain. The two great constituents of the Venetian landscape, the sea and the sky, are precisely the two features in nature which undergo most incessant change. The cloud-wreaths of this evening's sunset will never be repeated again; the bold and buttressed piles of those cloud-mountains will never be built again just so for us; the grain of orange and crim-

son that stains the water before our prow, we cannot be sure that we shall look upon its like again. The revolution of the seasons will, no doubt, repeat certain effects: spring will chill the waters to a cold, hard green; summer will spread its breadth of golden light on palace front and waterway; autumn will come with its pearly-grey scirocco days, and sunsets flaming to a sombre death; the stars of a cloudless winter night, the whole vast dome of heaven, will be reflected in the mirror of the still lagoon. But in spite of this general order of the seasons, one day is less like another day in Venice than anywhere else; the lagoon wears a different aspect each morning when you rise, the sky offers a varied composition of cloud each evening as the sun sets. Words cannot describe Venice, nor brush portray her ever-fleeting, ever-varying charm. At most they can give one mood that Venice creates, one aspect of the light and colour upon her palace walls and water streets. Venice is to be felt, not reproduced; to live there is to live a poem, to be daily surfeited with a wealth of beauty enough to madden an artist with despair; and hence it may be that Venice has had so few adequate portrayers among the thousands who have essayed the task, and not a single poet, if we except Shelley,—who better than any one else has, incidentally in “Julian and Maddolo,” caught and expressed the general spirit of the lagoon landscape—and Mr. Pinkerton, who, in “Adriatica,” has

seized another of the more prominent qualities of that landscape, the all-pervading, sad, caressing grey, characteristic of the lagoons in scirocco weather, and has translated this quality into its corresponding mood of mind with a touch at once so true and delicate, that I know not where to look for a more faithful portrayal of this emotion.

It is remarkable that the most frequent efforts to express the feeling of Venice in words, should have been cast in prose and not in verse, and should be the work of foreigners, not of Venetians. George Sand, Ruskin, Théophile Gautier, D'Annunzio, Prince Hohenlohe, all strangers over whom has been thrown the spell of the siren; who, leaving her, have borne away with them an incurable wound, for which the only solace has been to dwell again in memory with the features of the beloved, and to reproduce her lineaments on the mirror of the mind. The Venetians love their Venice, but they do not write about her; they live with her, and that is enough. With painters, on the other hand, the case is different; though here again we feel that the artists have given us a part of Venice, not the whole, some quality of light or of colour, one aspect of her infinitely various beauty. Although the great Venetian masters are chiefly concerned with the external life of their city, her pomp and circumstance, incidentally we find them influenced to the very depths of their art by the æsthetic qualities of their native place. The dome-like spaces which

Bellini leaves above his throned Madonnas' heads, recall the infinite sweep of the vast Venetian sky ; nowhere in painting do we feel, as we feel in Tintoret, that shimmer of light, that blending of tones which belong to the waters of the lagoon ; nowhere are the flaming glories of the sunset sky more vividly reproduced than in the triumphant splendours of Titian's easel. Turner perceived the diffusion and blending of light and colour which we note as a principal feature in the Venetian landscape, and strove to reproduce it in the radiant morning light of "Returning from the Ball," and in the marvellous symphony of colour in sky, sail, and sea, in "The Sun of Venice." Turner came near to grasping the spirit of Venetian landscape ; but even he found that there were more tones in heaven and sea than dwelt upon his palette.

When writing about the charm of Venice, it is difficult for those who feel it to avoid becoming dithyrambic. Venice admits no Laodiceans ; hot or cold you must be. The spell begins the moment the traveller leaves the dust and roar of the railway station, and finds himself suddenly, and without warning, on the borders of the Grand Canal. No one who has once felt the thrill of delight such a revelation brings is likely to forget it. And day by day the spell is deepened as the stranger grows familiar with the city's winding ways, and with the waters upon which she floats.

Hitherto we have asked what is the chief characteristic in this landscape which acts so swiftly and so

potently, and we have found that, in its widest terms, the dominant external, æsthetic quality of the lagoons is vastness and variety; the vast dome of heaven above, the vast expanse of water below, the infinite variety of light and colour in both.

But this wide external setting of sea and sky is not the only ingredient in the Circe-cup. There is the city itself and her people. And, coming a little closer, we may dwell for a while on the singular geographical position of Venice, and the uniqueness of her history and life. An old Venetian writer has styled one of his books, "*Venezia, Città nobilissima e singolare*"; and singular, indeed, is the position of this city, lying spread out like a lotus, her palaces and campanili thrown up from the long level of the water. Perhaps no piece of water in the world is more remarkable than this hundred and eighty-four square miles of Venetian lagoon, shut off from the sea by the narrow breakwater of sandy islands, called the Lidi.

Whether the lagoons were formed by a subsidence of the land and an inroad of the sea, leaving the Lidi as high points unsubmerged; or whether the Lidi were originally bars built by the rivers Brenta, Sile, and Piave, across their mouths, eventually causing those streams to flood their deltas, is an open question. But whatever may be the history of their formation, the lagoons are an essential feature in the landscape and the life of Venice. They gave pro-

tection to her first founders, when flying from the ruin wrought by the Huns upon the mainland; and to-day the health and safety of the city still depend upon the regular ebb and flow of their waters. The rivers which helped to make the lagoon have long been banished from their ancient courses, and now discharge their streams direct into the sea. All the varied movement of this water-system depends upon the Adriatic for its life and being. The lagoon is not a lake, still less is it a swamp, nor is it like the open sea. Its internal economy is a piece of most singular natural engineering, for the circumference of these hundred and eighty-four square miles, which at high tide seems to enclose one unbroken stretch of water, really contains four distinct water-systems, with separate watersheds, main arteries, and confluent streams by which the sea, twice a day, as from a great heart, comes pulsing in through the four breaks in the Lido barrier, performing its task of cleansing and purifying the lagoon, and bearing away with it, on its outgoing, the refuse of the city. At low tide these channels and arteries are quite distinctly marked, as they wind between the oozy banks of mud, which in spring are green with long trails of sea-grass, and in autumn are brown and bare, taking the reflection of colour from the sky. But at high tide the whole surface is flooded, and there lies Venice with her adjacent islets—San Servolo, San Clemente, Poveglia—set like gems upon a silver targe. On the

mainland shore of the lagoon there is a strange debatable territory called the *Laguna Morta*, where the sea and land are in doubt, blending with one another, and producing a region that is neither sea nor land. This dead lagoon is the home of wild fowl, and of pungent, salt sea-plants, tamarisk and samphire, and above all, in autumn, wide fields of pale sea-lavender. Beyond the *Laguna Morta* the ground consolidates, and the Venetian plain, studded with villas, poplars, vineyards, and mulberry-groves, trends upward to the foot of the barrier Alps. The lagoon, the Alps, and Venice, floating upon the one and guarded and circled by the other, are the noblest features in the landscape. From the water you can see the whole vast sweep of mountain ranges, beginning far in the east with the snowy hills of Carnia, curving round the broad Friulan plain and springing to exquisite proportions and jewelled shape in Monte Cavallo, Antelao, and Tofana, finally dying away in filmy pale-blue crests beyond Verona and the Lago di Garda. Here again we enjoy a sense of vastness and of space. These long and immovable lines of serrated peaks, touched, even in summer, now and again with snow, and in winter white and cold and clear to their very roots—peaks with beloved names that invite the climbing spirit,—all are yours to gaze at and to dream about, lazily rocked in your gondola on the bosom of the still lagoon.

Such is the general external aspect of Venice. The

history of the city is no less singular. When those first refugees from the mainland sought an asylum on the shoal mud-banks, drove their first piles, and built their wattled walls, they little thought that they were founding a community whose history would flow in unbroken current for more than a thousand years, that their descendants would be the richest lords in Europe, that their navies would ride supreme in all known waters, and pour the wealth and opulence of the East through Venice upon the Western world. In the isolation of their lagoons the Venetians acquired freedom and learned self-government. The obscurity of their position permitted them to grow undisturbed. The first seed, blown by the gust of invasion from the mainland to the mud islands, had time to mature in quiet, to strike deep roots into the soil, and to spring into a lofty and beautiful tree. The chief feature in the early history of Venice is that she belonged neither to the East nor to the West; neither to the empire of Constantinople, nor to the kingdoms which sprang up on the ruins of Rome. She lay between the two, a nest of hardy islanders, determined and ready to assert her independence. If the Lombards claimed her, she appealed to Constantinople; if the Emperor wished to interfere, she flung herself on the Western side. She drew from East and West alike that nourishment which went to make her what she really was—a nation by herself, a peculiar people, Venetians of Venice.

The history of this singular growth falls broadly into four great periods: these we may distinguish as the period of consolidation, the period of empire, the period of entanglement, and the period of decline.

When the early settlers, flying before the Hunnish terror, first took to the lagoons, they fell upon the various islands of the Archipelago and upon the long ridges of sand that guard the lagoon from the sea; and each little group of immigrants began a separate life for itself, retaining as far as possible the customs, religion, and constitution of their ruined home on the mainland. The Lidi, as being furthest removed from the danger of invasion, were the favourite asylum; the largest townships sprang up there—Heraclea, Jesolo, and Malamocco. These townships gradually drew together into a federation of twelve communes, each governed by its own tribune, and meeting in general assembly for the settlement of business which affected the universal interest of the lagoons. Jealousy and internecine feuds soon appeared, as one or other of these townships came to the front and endeavoured to impose its will upon its neighbours. It is possible that had this period of internal rivalry continued for long, the lagoon communities might have frittered away their strength in private quarrels, and the State of Venice might never have emerged at all. But external pressure came in time to save the confederation and to compel the lagoon townships to consolidate. The perils of the mainland sowed the first seeds

of Venice ; the peril of the sea was to form and complete her. Pipin's attack taught the Venetians for the first time how impregnable was their sea-girt home ; and they never forgot the lesson. For long months the Frankish chivalry was held at bay, defied by the impenetrable network of small canals and oozy mud-banks, through which no passage could be found. Finally the assault was shaken off, and Pipin retired to Milan. At this moment of their great victory a fusion between the Venetians and their home took place ; henceforth each belongs essentially to the other. It is to this triumph over Pipin that the Venetians looked back as to their birth-hour : the story of the victory is haloed in romance, and cherished as the most sacred record in all Venetian history. The Hunnish invasion proved the dangers of the mainland ; Pipin's attack demonstrated the peril of the sea. The Venetians now effected a compromise, and chose as the future home of their State that group of islands, midway between the sea and the land, then known as Rialto, but henceforth to bear the proud name of Venice.

The consolidation at Rialto closes the first period of Venetian history ; the period of deepest interest for us. Modern Venice, with all her pride of palaces, wealth of art, variety and picturesqueness of life, dates from the repulse of the Franks. The people of Venice in this struggle attained to manhood ; they learned their power ; their union gave them force.

They began to create their constitution, that singular monument of rigidity and durability, which persisted, with hardly a break in its structure, for the next ten centuries. The aristocracy of Venice emerged ; her empire extended, following the lines of her commerce in the East ; St. Mark was substituted for St. Theodore as patron ; the Crusades were used as a means to conquer Dalmatia and to plant the lion in the Greek Archipelago. Venice clashed with her rival Genoa, and struggled for this Eastern empire ; from the shock she emerged victorious. Into her state coffers and her private banks poured all that wealth which was presently to issue in the pomp of art, the pageantry of existence, her palace fronts along the Grand Canal, her learned academies, her printing press, her schools of painting, her regal receptions, the splendour of her state functions, the sumptuousness of private life ; all, in short, that made her what she was—the dazzling pleasure-garden of Europe, the envied of other States, although she had already overpassed her apogee. For her greatness and her pride were leading her towards her doom. Not content with her commercial empire in the East, Venice could not resist the temptation to put out her hand and to seize the wrecks of the Visconti dukedom ; to build herself an empire on the land. She was caught and entangled in the mesh of Italian intrigue ; she became a factor in continental politics, and was brought face to face



THE LION OF ST. MARK. BY CARPACCIO

with the great powers of Europe. Her progress upon the mainland aroused jealousy; the other States of Italy became uneasy for their own safety. Rome seized the opportunity to form the League of Cambray, whose object was to annihilate the Republic. The league failed in its object; but the wars it entailed left Venice crippled, and other disasters poured upon her head. Her commerce in the East received an irreparable blow by the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, which took the carrying trade out of her hands. She ceased to be the mart of Europe.¹ She was left to battle alone against the Turk; slowly expending blood and money, vainly appealing to indifferent Europe. Under this weight of misfortunes her strength was broken; she declined, and sank. The rigidity of her constitution held her still together; there were flashes of her old brilliancy and power in Morosini's conquest of the Peloponnese. But her day was past, and Venice gradually wasted away till she was but a wreck and hollow show of her former glory; the last of her doges yielded the State to Napoleon without a blow, and, laying the ducal biretta on the table, called to his servant, "Take it away, I shall not use it more."

But, though the republic fell, Venice still remains; Venice, the place and the people. There are two

¹ It is not impossible that the Suez Canal may restore to Venice her lost position. [It is doing so, fast. 1904.]

ways of seeing Venice intimately; one is by sea, with help of a gondola; the other is by land, wandering through that curious maze of narrow streets in which it is a delight to lose one's self. No conveyance can be more delightful, more easy, more romantic than the gondola: it is the most beautiful boat in the world, and the most luxurious carriage; and, like all things connected with Venice, is essentially a child of the place; its form is adapted to the needs of the strange city that created it; the lines of its structure are governed by the purpose it has to serve, the passage of the narrow Venetian waterways. The visitor who is interested in his carriage cannot do better than pay a visit to the *squero*, or building-yard, where his gondola was made. His gondolier will be proud to take him. The *squeri* are picturesque though pitchy places. The long lines of boats drawn up to be cleaned or mended lie like a row of stranded whales. At one corner the pitch-pot stands always ready boiling, sending its thick black smoke into the air; and the boys rush round the caldron, grimy as imps, each with a smearing-brush brandished in his hands. Or, perhaps, the bottom of some boat has to be dried thoroughly and in haste, before receiving its coating of melted tallow. This is done by kindling a brisk blaze of reeds under the hull; the flames leap high into the air; volumes of pale smoke roll up over the housetops, and are swept away seaward by the breeze; the boys dance about

in front of the flames, like demons officiating at some sacrifice; there is much shouting and noise; the whole scene is strange and picturesque.

The art of gondola-building is one which requires great nicety and exactness. Three qualities are especially demanded of the boat: that it should draw little water, that it should turn easily, and that it should be rowable by one oarsman. To secure these conditions the hull is built of light thin boards; only a very small portion of its flat bottom, thirty-six feet in length, rests upon the water, and the boat swings as on a pivot; and, finally, the boat is not equally divided by a line drawn from stern-post to bow—there is more bottom on one side than on the other, in order to counterbalance the weight of the rower behind. The ornaments of the gondola, the familiar steel prow or *ferro*, the sea-horses or dolphins, the rude carving of some scene from Tasso, all that makes the vessel the picturesque object we know, are furnished elsewhere than at the *squero*. Should any one be curious about the natural history of these ornaments, and their gradual development through the centuries, he cannot do better than consult the pictures in the Academy by Gentile Bellini and Carpaccio, and the later works of Guardi and Canaletto. In the former he will see the Venetian noblemen in their gondolas, with the bright covering of Eastern rugs for a *tenda*; the *ferro* not shaped as now, with its hatchet-head and six teeth, but merely a round

club of metal; the tall rower, graceful then as ever, in his party-coloured hose and slashed doublet. In the pictures of Guardi and Canaletto the gondola has undergone a great change; it is the modern gondola that we see: the boat has lost its brilliant colouring, but, as a compensation, it has certainly gained in grace.

The gondola is so intimately connected with life in the sea-city, that, of the pictures and impressions which one carries away, stored in the portfolio of the mind, a very large number must be associated with one's boat. And what can be more delightful than to start some morning early to spend a day upon the lagoon? Venice is never more lovely than on a clear summer morning; the air is sweet, the light falls on palace fronts in broad white flakes, the breeze blows fresh from the Lido, whither we are bound. As we row past the green point of the public gardens the fishing-boats are coming in from their night's toil, laden with fish for the Rialto market; some are not yet come to anchor, and cross and recross one another as they tack, threading the figures of their sea *sarabande*; others lie, bow by painted bow, their nets hauled mast-high to be mended and dried in the sun, and their great coloured sails close together, and folded like the wings of a butterfly just alighted on a flower. The sails of Venice are a constant object of beauty in the landscape; their deep oranges and reds, their fantastic designs—here a heart pierced by a

sword, there a rose in bloom, or a star with a flash of lightning breaking from it—contrast so vividly with the cool grey of the waters upon which they float. On the Lido itself, when one has reached the Adriatic side, one may wander for miles in either direction along the shore, where the lizards bask in the hot sand, where the pale sea-holly, with its delicate violet bloom, grows to perfection, mingled with the faint yellow of the evening primrose. The Adriatic, the great water avenue to Venice, opens away to the south-east, while on the furthest horizon you can just discern the faint blue line of hills above Trieste, and the top of Monte Maggiore that overhangs Fiume and the Quarnero. A little way along the shore, and out of reach of those crowds that flock to the bathing establishment, is an unfinished wooden chalet,¹ standing in grounds partially enclosed, and planted with euonymus, a shrub that grows luxuriantly in Venice. The house was begun for Victor Emmanuel, but never completed; and from its upper windows you command a glorious view of Venice, backed by her chain of guardian Alps. The city lies like a flower upon the water; the rosy front of the ducal palace, the slender campanili of San Giorgio and San Francesco, set on either side of St. Mark's more massive tower; on the one hand the bright green woods of the public garden, and far away on the other the cones of the Euganean Hills, that rise like

¹ It is pulled down now, but was there when this paper was written.

islands above the misty level of the plain : over all, the vault of the vast Venetian sky, cut by the serrated line of silent and eternal snow. It is pleasant, as the day grows hotter, to leave the glare of the more open shore of Sant' Elizabetta, and to seek the woods of the Favorita, where the acacia groves and catalpas yield some shade, where the whole ground is carpeted with the white and gemlike star of Bethlehem ; or, better still, to wander down the English-looking lane and water-meadows that lead to the fort of San Nicolo, where the gondola can be sent to meet us. Inside the fort the grass is greener and the boskage more profound than anywhere else within easy reach of Venice. In late spring the perfume from the acacia blooms is borne far out across the water, and in the grass sweet violets grow in abundance. Behind the acacia grove is a Protestant burial-ground, now disused, where lie the bones of many an Englishman who came to Venice for pleasure, and remained to die : here is the tomb of Sir Francis Vincent, the last but one of England's diplomatic agents to the Republic ; of John Murray and of Consul Smith, and here, too, that distinguished Anglo-Venetian, Rawdon Brown, prepared himself a grave, and daily came to tend the shrubs and flowers at whose feet he hoped to sleep. The Austrians granted Mr. Brown this exceptional privilege ; but the present masters of Venice refused to carry it into effect, and nothing now remains except the

thick and rankly growing hedge which surrounds the empty grave. There is no more beautiful promenade in Venice than that around the ramparts of the San Nicolo; past the little red *osteria*, the *Buon Pesce*, where the blackbirds sing in the ivy-mantled walls of the old convent garden, out by the Custom House, and on to the ramparts themselves. In summer the broad earthworks are spread with a carpet of more than Persian brilliancy; crimson poppies, purple salvias, and vivid green grass. Round the corner of the fort the current sweeps in or out of the Lido mouth, the ancient water entrance to the city, and marks the water surface in swirls and varying tones of silver grey. Far to the east, in the offing, the sunlight falls upon the congregated sails of the fishing-boats plying their business by the Piave's mouth, where fish are most abundant. Everywhere there is a sense of space in sky and sea, and the pungent odour of sea-brine upon the air.

In the evening we may return by the island convent of San Lazzaro, where the Armenian monks spend their placid lives in study and the culture of their garden lands here and on the Lido. The island is a veritable gem of colour set upon the lagoon; for the monks have painted their convent a deep crimson, and all day long San Lazzaro glows upon the water like an oleander bloom blown from one of its own garden bowers. Ungrudging access is granted to this garden and cloister. The terraced

walk looks towards Venice, and is planted with alternate cypress and oleander trees. Between these exquisite settings are framed vignettes of the city ; San Giorgio and San Marco, San Giovanni and San Francesco; and the green point of the public gardens. This terrace is a place on which to bask and dream the evening through ; watching the crabs sunning themselves and fighting on the sloping wall-foundations, or noting the ripples stirred by some fish upon the shoal lagoons ; watching, too, the sunset flame itself to death behind the Euganean Hills, while the heavens slowly change from gold to orange, to crimson, to purple, to pale transparent azure, till night comes silently over the Eastern waters, veiling the brilliant hues of day ; the first stars begin to tremble in the blue ; it is time to seek the gondola and to row home towards the long line of piazza lights that make a broad inviting path for us across the lagoon.

The lagoon offers many expeditions more distant than the one to which we have just referred. Torcello, with its ancient basilica and mosaics, its Greek church of Santa Fosca, its old traditions of early lagoon history, and its present desolation, will always prove a favourite. The way to Torcello takes us through six miles of lagoon landscape. After leaving Venice behind us, our prow is set towards the easternmost corner of the lagoon, that desolate unexplored tract of marshland, formerly known as the "Dogado," where the doge had his preserves of fishing and shooting,

and whence came the wild-duck, which by custom he was obliged to present to every noble on St. Barbara's Day. Torcello lies between Venice and the Dogado; and to reach it we have to pass Murano, with its glass furnaces sending their long black streamers of smoke into the air. Presently we reach Mazzorbo, once the greater city, the *major urbs*, now composed of a few scattered houses, a wine-shop, and a church, whose campanile is riddled with Austrian shot. The Alps go with us all the way to Mazzorbo, marching along, pace for pace; but at the entrance to the village we forsake the open lagoon, and pass into a narrow canal that winds between high garden walls, over whose coping hangs a mantle of ivy, with here and there a burning spot of pomegranate flower. Spring and autumn are equally delightful at Torcello. In spring the orchards and the hedges of thorn are in full bloom; the delicate sprays of pink or white are thrown up in relief against the blue sky. In autumn all the water-meadows are a shimmer of purple-red, from the feathery plumes of the sea-lavender that give to the waste spaces the colour and feeling of a Scotch moor. The island of Torcello is a desolate place, with a world's-end atmosphere about it. Once it was populous, but now marshes and malaria render it almost uninhabitable. There is a little museum of antiquities that have been found on the spot. But the *custode* of the museum, one of the few natives of Torcello, is more interesting than any of the

antiquities which he guards. He is a robust and healthy young fellow, but with a manner so mellow, so dreamy, so far away, such a sense of ancient half-remembered things in his blue eyes, that it seems as though the very spirit of Torcello had passed into his soul. He will take you round the museum, laying a light hand here on a torso, there on a Roman tomb. "A *cippus*," he will say, in gentle, lingering tones, "a Roman *cippus*"; and then, as you pass on, he adds lower, as though quite to himself, and caressing some secret all his own, "a Roman *cippus*." The campanile of Torcello is, as usual in Venice, a solid, square brick tower, rising to a great height, and the view from it, when you have climbed the rickety wooden ladders that lead to the bell-chamber, is most striking. To the east the broken land—half sea, half land—begins; and the whole country is cut by wide ditches which intersect one another. These are the "Valli," where fish are bred for the Venice market; and a very valuable property the "Valli" are. To the south is the Adriatic, and the long line of Lidi breakwaters, curving away to Chioggia; Venice and the Euganean Hills to the west; and north, the ever-present Alps, visible from Torcello as hardly from anywhere else, for there is absolutely nothing to interrupt the view; the plain runs right up to their roots, and the eye may wander on and on till it finds the eternal snows of Tofana, Antelao, or Pelmo. The sea and sky, Venice and the

mountains, these are the four chords on which the music of the Venetian landscape is played.

A sail home from Torcello in the evening is a delightful experience; and some of the gondoliers are skilful at handling their boats, without keel or rudder, steering them with an oar behind, like the Vikings of old. If it be summer or autumn, a storm, sudden and furious, is not at all improbable, and will make no bad close to such a day. The great masses of cloud gather in the east, and sail, slow and stately, towards us, surely gaining upon us. The van of the storm-clouds is curved into an arc by the pressure of the wind behind, though here upon the water there is only breeze enough to fill the sail. Steadily the billowy battalions advance until, as we are off Murano, the colour of the water begins to change to a pale pea-green, no longer transparent, but thick as jade. There is a feeling of oppression in the air, a brooding stillness, then suddenly the wind drops; not a breath, not a hush for five minutes, while the storm-clouds overtake us. Then, far away behind Murano, one catches a low humming, like the noise of a threshing-machine; it is the wind in the city—you must down sail and make for the nearest post. The hurricane leaps out from the city, striking the water, tearing it into foam, and flinging the spray high into the air. There is fury and confusion in the sky. The thundery masses are rent and riven; through the gaps of dun-coloured vapour you catch

the steely blue of storm-clouds, boiling as in a caldron ; and beyond them even again, pure blue sky and sunlight. A rainbow rises high in the air, relieved against the turbulent heavens, and spans the lagoon. Then the whole tornado sweeps away south-westward. The sunset reasserts itself, and dashes the sky with streamers of crimson and orange ; then darkness, with lightning and storm slowly dying away into the west, leaving the heavens serene and the night breeze fresh and cool. These summer storms are sudden and almost tropical in their fury, but they are quickly spent ; and, like tropical cyclones, their path is a narrow one, confined to one line on the lagoon, but where they strike they have been known to unroof houses.

Besides these better known expeditions to the Lido, Torcello, and San Lazzaro, there are many others quite as worthy the attention of any one who has time and to spare in Venice. A little to the right of the canal that leads to Torcello, lies the island of San Francesco in Deserto. In a desert of water and mud-banks, Saint Francis's island certainly stands. It is easily distinguished and always remembered by its solitary stone pine, which spreads its umbrella of sunproof boughs over one angle of the convent garth. For San Francesco is still a convent of the Franciscan order, and the brothers show the stone coffin in which their founder used to acclimatise himself to death. But the large square of

rich deep grass which the island walls enclose is by far the most enticing feature of San Francesco. A noble avenue of cypresses, the finest to be found near Venice, runs down one side; and in spring the air is heavy with the perfume of the narcissus, which grows here luxuriantly. Some way off to the south lies Treporti, on the outermost bank of sand that keeps the Adriatic from invading the lagoon. At Treporti the scenery is very different from that of the other places we have visited: long sweeps of sandy dune, covered with coarse bent grass and heather, and broken into pools of brackish water that reflect the sky like a mirror. The ground is all uncultivated; the air is filled with pungent aromatic odours born of the sea and the wild sea-loving plants. On the shores, which seem to stretch illimitably on either hand, the sand is fine and soft and yellow; there is no choicer place for a bathe; the sea is wide open before you, warm, limpid, pure, and inviting; and as you swim far out, the domes and campanili of Venice rise up in low relief upon the water-level, and the sound of her bells comes mellowed and blended across the blue expanse.

Or if the western lagoon is to be explored, no expedition is more favourable for this purpose than the one to Fusina. Through Fusina once lay the main road between Venice and Padua; but the Austrian railway bridge has, until lately, diverted the current of traffic from Fusina to Mestre, and any one

making the journey to Fusina was almost sure to have the lagoon to himself, or, at most, to share it with some sparse and scattered fishermen. Within the last few years, however, a tramway has been opened between Fusina and Padua, and a small steamboat plies from Venice to meet the trams; but this will not seriously break the loneliness of the voyage, nor rob of its inalienable charm that great sweep of lagoon that opens away from the mouth of the Giudecca, and stretches on and on to the lagoon's end at Chioggia and Brondolo. It is well to choose a grey day for this expedition—one of those pearly silver-grey days, so subdued, so delicate in suggested colour, that come every now and then in autumn. As the gondola leaves the Giudecca canal and makes for the island of Saint George-among-the-Seaweeds, the surface of the lagoon has an oily appearance, and is almost pallid in its grey whiteness. In the offing you can see the few trees which stand in a group near the port of Malamocco, and the spars of some big shipping; nearer still the fort of Sant' Angelo and the island of Saint George itself. Everything is mellowed by an all-pervading semi-transparent haze, which, on the horizon, confounds the limits of the sea and sky. Upon the surface of this silver-grey mirror rise the black silhouettes of the fishermen; each solitary figure upright and poised upon the stem of his narrow boat. The gondola passes under the red brick wall of San Giorgio, where the Madonna stands

guardian at the corner, and the saint in stone charges and slays the dragon. The island was once a convent belonging to the Benedictine order, and the home of the Venetian Saint, Lorenzo Giustinian, first Patriarch of Venice; but now the church has lost its campanile, and the church itself, refectory, and cloisters are converted to the base uses of a powder magazine. At Fusina the Brenta used to flow into the lagoon, and a considerable portion of its waters still discharge here—sufficient to allow the gondola to proceed up this branch till it joins the present main stream. This is worth doing; for in spring the Brenta is rich in water-lilies, yellow ranunculus, and flags. From the banks of the Brenta one looks westward across a curious flat country—so low-lying that one hardly perceives any difference between its level and that of the lagoon—until the eye reaches the Euganean Hills, thirty miles away, whose cones and pyramids form such a beautiful episode in every Venetian sunset.

The expeditions to be made upon the lagoon are so numerous and so various that it is impossible to catalogue them here, nor is it our intention to do so. Our object is to show how great is the variety in the Venetian landscape, in Venice as seen from outside. But it must not be supposed that the lagoons are always steeped in sunlight. They have their moods: now black beneath a sudden storm; now cold and hard as steel under the piercing

east wind—the *bora* that reaches Venice from the hills above Trieste; and sometimes in winter wrapped in an impenetrable blanket of damp mist, so thick and heavy that one may easily lose one's course between the Lido and Venice; and the steamers, slowly feeling their way in or out, loom for an instant and then disappear, swallowed up in that dense wall of vapour, and the sound of their fog-horns dies away down the wind. All the shipping looks ghostly, tall, and gaunt as one passes it, and the whole scene is like sea-traffic in the underworld.

Nor is the variety less remarkable or less enchanting if we forsake the gondola and take to the land. Nothing can be more full of charm than a walk through Venice; the infinite variety and windings of the *calli*, the sudden debouchment upon some open *campiello*, the perpetual changes of scene. There is usually some surprise in store for any one who takes a walk through the city; either some piece of architecture, some balcony or doorway that has escaped notice, or some vivid picture of popular life.

The beauty of the city itself is, of course, more subject to destruction than the beauty of the lagoon. It seems impossible that "progress" should ever be able really to ruin the vast dome of the sky and the wide expanse of sea-floor; but inside the town, restoration, new streets, iron bridges have entailed a decided loss in picturesqueness. Yet even on this point Venice is more fortunate than many other Italian

cities. It is not long before salt winds and sun begin their labour upon the newest stone, and insensibly man's handiwork suffers a sea-change that gradually brings the most glaring restorations into harmony with their surroundings. There are two moments particularly favourable for an artist to take his walks in Venice. One is after a rain shower, when the old *intonaco* upon the walls has every tone brought out, and is vivid with colour ranging from grey through pale sea-green to red—the old Venetian red with which so many houses used to be stained. The other choice moment for a walk is in the early morning before the business of the day has begun. The sunlight falls in such broad cool flakes upon the Istrian stone, the islands San Clemente and San Servolo look exquisitely pure and white upon the water, San Giorgio Maggiore springs up like a goddess new risen from her bath. As one wanders about the deserted *calli*, the birds sing in the enclosures; and on the *Zattere* the air is laden with the perfume of honeysuckle and other creepers that trail over the wall of Princess Dolgorouki's garden. Indeed, the gardens in Venice, like everything else in the city, have a character all their own. In the first place, they are greatly prized, for space is scarce in this city built upon islands won from the very sea. The soil of Venice, composed of lagoon mud, is rich and heavy, but so impregnated with salt that only certain plants will grow freely in it, and it hardly repays the labour to force reluctant

flowers towards an imperfect and precarious bloom. But the variety of plants that thrive and are happy in Venetian gardens is quite sufficient to furnish forth a lordly show. Many flowering and aromatic shrubs take kindly to the soil ; then roses, and above all the banksia ; most bulbs ; and, freest and happiest of all, carnations—the *garofoli* that play so large a part in Italian love-stories. There were two gardens on the Giudecca,¹ very different in their character, but each illustrating in its way what a Venetian garden may be. In the one every resource of wealth and art has been lavished to produce a succession of brilliant beds. In the middle of this desert of colour is a green oasis, a sort of English orchard, where the fruit trees are gathered together, and fling their laced and flickering shadows on turf as fine, as velvety, and of as deep a green as any to be found in England. On either side the walks meander away among beds of splendid colour that varies with the varying seasons. There is an Oriental lavishness about the scene ; the eye is surfeited, and the scent of flowers almost oppresses the air. The other garden is not less beautiful ; but it has been left in the condition given to it by its old Venetian proprietors. A narrow strip is divided from the rest of the garden by a thick hedge ; and here are congregated all the flowers that grow freely in Venice. The flame-coloured trumpets of the bignonia hang from the cypress, up which it has climbed ; the walks

¹ In 1887 ; one is now destroyed—converted into a cement factory.

are overarched by bowers of roses ; banksias festoon the wall ; one corner is filled by a *Daphne odorifera* that draws to its perfume innumerable butterflies. At intervals openings in the hedge give access to that part of the garden which is set apart for profit rather than for pleasure ; aisle upon aisle of vine-covered pergolas cross each other ; and down these cool promenades, where the sun is never too strong, one can saunter on and on, till the boundary wall is reached, and before one open out the long reaches of the lagoon that stretch away to Malamocco and the fort of Alberoni.

It is in the streets of Venice that one comes to know the people and the manner of life they lead. And it will be strange if one does not like them, in spite of all their faults. There is a gaiety, a laughter and light-heartedness about these children of the lagoons that is very winning ; a disengagement and apparent frankness of manner that captivate, for all their indifference to truth, and that fatal desire to find out what you want them to say and to say it.

I doubt if there was ever much decided costume in Venice except among the nobles and the gondoliers, and what there was has disappeared. The women, however, still wear that most graceful of all garments—a shawl large enough to cover the head and to fall below the waist—handkerchiefs, they call them,—and they have unerring taste in the choice of colours. These shawls are seldom gaudy, their tone is usually

subdued—fawn, pale mauve, sometimes a tawny red ; the strong colours are reserved for the bodices and neckcloths. The linen of Venice is famed for its whiteness, and of this the women make abundant display on *festas* and holy days. Nothing can surpass the grace of these shawl-clad figures, seen down the long perspective of a narrow street, or gathered in groups round the carved well-head in some open *campiello*.

Although there is not much colour and variety of costume to be met with in Venice, the streets themselves are full of picturesque suggestions. Most of the shops are quite open in front, and the whole contents may be seen—part, indeed, overflows and straggles on to the narrow pathway. Here is a corn-dealer's shop, with open sacks of polenta flour of every shade of yellow ; there an old-clothes shop, with dresses of every hue and shade ; and next door to it is a worker in bronze, whose rows of burnished pots and plates serve as a red-gold background. Then, again, up at the Rialto, where the vegetables are sold, what a wealth of colour in the piles of tomatoes, vegetable marrows, and great pumpkins cut down the middle, and displaying all their orange insides. One of the charms of a stroll through Venice, of losing one's self, as is easily done, in that labyrinth of streets, is that one never knows what surprise may be in store. Now it is some scene of market or popular life ; again it is a great stone angel

standing guardian at some *calle*-head ; here a coat-of-arms that sets you blazoning, there a Gothic door with terra-cotta mouldings : the place seems inexhaustible ; and for ambient to all this variety and richness of art and life, there is the singularly limpid air and light of the lagoon.

Few crowds are more cheerful or better ordered than a Venetian crowd. The people love to congregate ; every one is out on the business of pleasure, and determined to enjoy themselves to the full. There are flashes of a ready wit in repartee that play across the throng. Touches of sentiment, too, are sometimes displayed, the sentiment that finds expression in the quaint *villotte* or Venetian popular songs. The struggle between the sea-wind and the land-wind is regarded as a battle for ever being waged ; the clouds are the victims of this endless strife—"They are going to the mountains, but the mountains will not receive them." The immortal wanderings of the moon strike the Venetian fancy as they struck the fancy of Shelley and of Leopardi : "Povaretta ! viaggia sempre e non riposa mai" ; and sometimes a profounder note is struck, as in the remark, "Quando viene il desiderio non c'è mai troppo." But these are rarer touches, depths that are seldom stirred ; as a rule the Venetian *popolo* is the lightest and most easy-going in the world, free as a child from care or doubt about right or wrong. Indeed, this carelessness, so disturbing to a northern

temper, apt to take all things seriously, is characteristic not of the Venetian *popolo* only, but of the race in general. The writer once had the misfortune to be summoned as a witness before the Pretore. His fellow-witness, the only one, was an old woman dressed in a thick flannel petticoat. After weary waiting in the ante-room, where every one was smoking and throwing their matches about, we were summoned into the crowded court, made to stand up, and were lectured on the nature of an oath and the terrible consequences of perjury. While this was going on, one of the policemen suddenly said to the old woman, "You're burning," but he never moved; and sure enough a thin thread of smoke was rising from the old lady's petticoat. "Santissima Vergine Maria!" she cried in horror, but no one moved. The judge on the bench put his finger-tips together, observed the witness for a second, and confirmed the policeman's remark, "Yes, you are burning"; and prosecutor, counsel, and general public confirmed the judge, and said, "Yes, she's burning." The old lady's fellow-witness could not let her burn in this way quite quietly, so he caught her petticoats tight in his hands, while the judge, still with his finger-tips together, nodded approval from the bench and said, "Squeeze her, squeeze her, squeeze her well." The smouldering flame was soon put out. The judge smiled, the policemen smiled, the public smiled, and the case went on.

The Venetians have always been, and still are, a *feſta*-loving people. In the days of its wealth and pride the Republic ſpent lavishly upon its State entertainments. The natural capacities of the city for a great ſpectacle, the winding waterway of the Grand Canal, opening upon the baſin of St. Mark, with San Giorgio on one ſide, and the ducal palace, the Piazzetta, and the Baſilica upon the other, the curve of the Riva closed by the public gardens, all ſeem to invite and require the complement of ſome ſcenic diſplay. The pictures of the old Venetian maſters—Bellini, Carpaccio, Veroneſe—prove how deeply the Venetians revelled in the pageants of State. But when the Republic fell the great ceremonies came to an end. Only among the people the roots of the original paſſion were kept alive. The people have loſt moſt of their old ſports in which they delighted: the battle on the bridge between the rival factions of black and red, the Nicolotti and Caſtellani; the human towers and pyramids, piled up in many a fanciful ſhape, called the *Forze d'Ercole*; but one ſport—the national ſport of the Venetians—the regatta, ſtill lives on; and lately, ſince Venice became a part of United Italy, the Town Council has done much to revive the ſplendour of the ſhow. The regatta is frequently combined with a ſerenade on the Grand Canal in the evening, and the two together form a ſpectacle which can be ſurpaſſed by no other city in Europe. The race is

rowed in light gondolas, much smaller than the gondola in ordinary use. The course is from the stairs of the public garden up to the station and back again to the Palazzo Foscari, the traditional winning-post. The prizes are money and flags for the first three, and a pig and a flag with a pig upon it for the last. Long before the race begins the Grand Canal is crowded with boats of every sort and size: gondolas, *sandolos*, *barche*, *barchette*, *topos*, *cavaline*, *vipere*, *bissone*—there is no end to the names and kinds of Venetian craft. The façades of the palaces are all a-flutter with flags, and from the windows hang tapestries, carpets, curtains, anything that will add to the dance of colour. The balconies are filled with people; every window has its bevy of heads; the very roofs are black with sightseers. Down below on the water the scene is no less animated and brilliant. The course is kept by large boats with twelve oars, called *bissone*. Each of these is decorated symbolically. One represents the Arctic regions; its rowers are clad like walruses, a Polar bear lies on its bows, and a block of ice serves as a seat for its captain and steersman. Another represents the tropic regions, with palms and gorgeous flowers for decoration. A third is a trophy of the Murano glassworkers' art. These great boats, crossing and recrossing one another on the waters of the canal, weave, as it were, a web of colour. The eye is ever charmed by some new combination of the water-loom. Presently comes

the boom of a distant cannon. The race has begun. A hush falls upon the crowd, only to be broken when the first boat appears round the curve, and it becomes certain whether Nicolotto or Castellano leads. The race sweeps by, and disappears again behind the Rialto, which swallows it up like a yawning mouth. There is a perpetual buzz of voices—criticism, comment, bets flying about—until the boats come in sight on their journey home; a moment of breathless excitement, then a roar of the victor's name as he shoots his bow past the winning-post and snatches up his flag as he passes. The race is finished. All the while, overhead is the wide, blue, quiet sky, and, underneath, the water silently, persistently, heedlessly going its way to the sea.

In the evening the serenade starts from some point above the Rialto. The singers and orchestra are placed on a barge which is decorated and lighted by numbers of little lamps arranged sometimes like a pyramid, sometimes like a fountain of fire. The object of every good gondolier is to take his *padroni* as near to the music as possible, whether they like it or not. The result is that the singers' barge soon becomes wedged in between a solid mass of gondolas, like a ship in an ice-floe; and it is only with the greatest difficulty that any progress can be made. The whole of the solid mass floats slowly down with the tide, getting more and more closely jammed as the canal narrows to pass the Rialto bridge. Under that wide

arch the scene is most fantastic. The electric light casts its cold white ray down the Grand Canal, falling now on this palace front and now on that, causing them to start into sudden and ghastly prominence, like ghosts unmasked. The smoke of the Bengal lights streams out from under the arch in dense coloured masses, and wavers away on the light air. The figures of the poised and statuesque gondoliers, each one standing upright on the stern of his boat, oar in hand and hair blown by the breeze, form a series of varied and beautiful silhouettes against the darker background of the houses or the sky. The serenade is a long affair; and when one has had enough of the whole strange and fantastic scene, escape is easy down one of the innumerable side canals that lead to the quiet quarters of the town.

Besides these great spectacles of regatta and serenade, there are many other *feste* in Venice, chiefly of a religious character. Each parish church, for example, honours the feast of its patron saint by a procession to all the shrines within the parish boundaries. It is a picturesque sight to see one of these bright trains of priests and people streaming across the bridges and along the *fondamenta* of some small canal. First come the porters of the church clad in long blouses of white, red, and blue, bearing the candles, the pictures, the banners, and images of the church; then a band of music, playing the gayest of operatic airs, and behind the music, the priests sur-

rounding the *parocco*, who carries the Host under a canopy of cloth of gold ; more music, a long file of the devout bearing candles, and boys with crackers and guns bring up the rear of the procession.* The day ends with public dancing in the largest *campo* of the parish. Venice still records her gratitude for salvation from plague in two annual ceremonies, the *Madonna della Salute* in November and the *Redentore* in July. On both occasions the priests of every parish in Venice go in procession from St. Mark's to the respective churches of the Salute and Redentore. As the *festa* of the Redentore falls in high summer the occasion is seized to make its vigil a night-long water-frolic. As soon as the sun has set, the broad Giudecca canal begins to swarm with boats, gaily dressed with boughs and lanterns, forming an arbour under which a supper-table is spread for a party of friends. There are fireworks and prizes for the best-dressed boats ; and towards two o'clock all the crowd move off to the Lido to salute the rising sun, and rush into the sea to meet it.

One of the most curious and characteristic of Venetian popular ceremonies is the way in which they keep Good Friday.

If a stranger arrived in Venice on Good Friday, he would certainly take that day for a feast and not for a fast. The streets are full of people in their Sunday best. The inevitable sign and signature of a *festa*

* The reigning Pope has altered all this.

is present everywhere in the herds of children who rush, roll, and romp among the passengers, whirling their rattles to frighten Judas, or turning somersaults and calling out *Carpaccio* for the benefit of æsthetic foreigners. But, upon this day, the chief delight of the Venetian children is to fit up a *Santo Sepolcro*, and to appeal, on the strength of it, to the crowd for coppers. In most of the churches there are representations of the Holy Sepulchre, and the children of Venice follow the lead of their Church, but they are content with less apparatus. Indeed, almost anything will do for a *Santo Sepolcro*. I saw one little creature, about six or seven, who had constructed her sepulchre from an old bottle, a sprig of bay, and two candle-ends, and who appealed most successfully to the passers-by, winning as much for her pretty face and gentle mien, as for her idea of the Holy Grave.

It is at night, however, and in the more populous quarters of the city, little frequented by strangers, that the most characteristic sight of a Venetian Good Friday is to be seen. The people of the quarter, the shopkeepers, wine-sellers, fishermen, agree to sing the Twenty-four Hours, a long chaunt in twenty-four verses, following the life of our Lord through His Passion. The ceremony is a purely popular one; the Church has no part in it. The natives of the quarter subscribe among themselves, in kind or in money, to bear the expenses of the function; one gives oil for the lamps, another the wick, another wine for the

singers, who are usually a company of gondoliers or porters from the district. At one end of the *calle*, a shrine is raised in the shape of a temple; the pillars and pediment and all its lines defined by little glass lamps, whose flames flicker and waver in the evening breeze. The yellow light of these altar-lamps contrasts strangely with the stronger and whiter light of the ordinary gas-jet that projects from the middle of the shrine; and this blended light is thrown upon the faces of the men and women who stand in a dense group waiting till the singing shall begin. On either side of the *calle* the upper windows of the houses are open, and filled with heads, leaning out, looking down and chatting to friends below. At the far end of the street, crowning the angle of a garden wall, stands a Madonna, carved in stone, with the Infant in her arms, a lamp and rose-wreaths about her feet, and behind her the thick clusters of a wistaria that has climbed up and falls in delicate violet showers about her head. Over all is the long narrow strip of dusky sky that the house-roofs cut, lit by one large star.

Presently the singing begins. In harsh, but powerful voice, the leader of the band strikes up the first of the twenty-four hours, and the rest of his company join in as they catch the note. The tune is a grave and sombre chaunt, and the whole reminds one of psalm-singing in a Scotch kirk, with the precentor leading the way. Each verse takes about three minutes to sing, and there is a pause of five minutes

between one verse and the next. The crowd is quiet during the singing; but in the interval the women begin to chatter, the men take a pull at their long virginias, and the thin blue smoke floats lazily up into the night; the boys rush and tumble, until the precentor's voice, commencing the next verse, bids silence fall upon the throng once more.

The ceremony lasts about three hours, and ends, of course, in the inevitable supper at the nearest wine-shop. As we return to go down the *calle* they are singing the fourteenth hour. The light from the altar falls upon the hair of the women, the bronzed necks and faces of the men, and the fairer faces of the children they hold in their arms to see the sight. One moment, and we turn the corner by the garden wall. There all is quiet; not a footfall in the streets, and above us the silence and the fragrance of the rich Venetian night.

IN THE CITY

THE CAMPANILE OF SAN MARCO AND THE LOGGETTA OF SANSOVINO

THE bell-towers of Venice, of which St. Mark's was, if not the earliest, certainly the finest specimen, are not only a characteristic feature in that city of characteristic architecture, but they display peculiarities of form which distinguish them both from the round campanili of Ravenna and from the Lombard type of campanile prevalent throughout North Italy. The Lombard campanile—whether we take St. Satiro in Milan, dating from the ninth century, or that noblest specimen, the tower of Pomposa, near Comacchio, built in 1063—invariably has its shaft divided horizontally into sections or zones. Each zone is usually pierced by one, two, three, or four apertures, and is adorned at the top by a series of hanging arches (*archetti pensili*), sometimes hanging free for the whole width of the tower, sometimes carried on slightly-projecting pilasters. The bell-chamber is essentially a part of the shaft, and is, in fact, the last zone into which the shaft is divided.

The Venetian bell-tower, on the other hand, is not divided into zones. It is a square shaft of brick, unpierced except for small windows near the angles, which serve to light the internal stair. It has for ornament pilasters running up the whole height of the shaft and connected with one another by arches. Where you find the hanging arch on a Venetian campanile, as at Torcello, there has been a deviation from the pure Venetian type and an admixture of the Lombard style. The bell-chamber, again, is not an essential part of the Venetian shaft. It has been placed as a separate structure on the top of the shaft.

Like so much else in Venetian architecture, the form of the Venetian campanile may be traced to the Levant, for the Venetian bell-tower is nothing but the protection-tower of a monastery such as those on Mount Athos, with a bell-chamber added. In Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant* there is a drawing of the Monastery of St. Paul, which shows us two towers exactly like Venetian campaniles without the bell-chamber. These towers were "built for the defence of the monastery, not as belfries"; and perhaps a reminiscence of their ancient purpose may be seen in the fact that the Venetian campanile usually stands away from the church—is not attached to it—was, in short, still considered as a place where the clergy with the holy vessels could take refuge from plunder or from fire.

Nothing certain is known as to the exact date

when the Campanile of St. Mark was founded. Sansovino, without citing authority, but really following the *Cronaca Sivos*, declares that the foundations were laid in the year 888. Gallicciolli gives the year 911, relying on the chronicler Feroldo, who states that the Republic, which had grown in wealth, began to coin silver money, and determined to lay the foundations of the great Campanile; this date is supported by Zuliani, who, writing as late as 1692, says that in the year 911 "the foundations of the Campanile were laid with spurs (*speroni*), which, running out round them like a star and extending in all directions, held the central foundation firm." Romanin is inclined to accept the date 911, but adds that the building of the actual tower did not begin till 940. Vasari, in his life of Arnolfo di Lapo, ascribes the foundation of the Campanile to the master builder Buono of Bergamo, and assigns the event to the year 1152; but clearly he is confounding the beginning of the tower with its completion, which seems to have taken place in 1148.

The wide discrepancy of the dates, 888 to 1148, may perhaps be accounted for by the conjecture that the work of building proceeded slowly, either with a view to allowing the foundations to consolidate, or owing to lack of funds, and that the chroniclers recorded each resumption of work as the beginning of the work. One point may, perhaps, be fixed. The Campanile must have been some way above ground

by the year 997, for the hospital founded by the sainted Doge, Pietro Orseolo, which is said to have been attached to the base of the tower, was consecrated in that year. The Campanile was finished, as far as the bell-chamber at least, in 1148, under the Doge Domenico Moresini, whose sarcophagus and bust surmount the portal of San Nicolo del Lido.

The chroniclers are at variance among themselves as to the date of the foundation, nor has an examination of the foundations themselves led to any discovery which enables us to determine that date; but one or two considerations would induce us to discard the earlier epochs. The foundations must have been designed to carry a tower of the same breadth, though possibly not of the same height, as that which has recently fallen. But in the year 888 had the Venetians such a conception of their greatness as to project a tower far more massive than any which had been hitherto constructed in Italy? Did they possess the wealth to justify them in such an enterprise? Would they have designed such a tower to match St. Mark's, which was at that time a small church with walls of wood? It is more probable that the construction of the Campanile belongs to the period of the second church of St. Mark, which was begun after the fire of 976 and consecrated in 1094.

The height of the Campanile at the time of its fall was 98.60 metres (322 ft.), from the base to the head

of the angel, though a considerable portion of this height was not added till 1510; its width at the base of the shaft 12·80 metres (35 ft. 2 in.), and one metre (3 ft. 3 in.) less at the top of the shaft. The weight has been calculated at about 18,000 tons.

Thanks to excavations at the base of the tower made by Com. Giacomo Boni, at the request of Mr. C. H. Blackall, of Boston, U.S., in the year 1885, a report of which was printed in the *Archivio Veneto*, tom. xxix. p. 355, we possess some accurate knowledge about a portion of the foundation upon which this enormous mass rested.

The subsoil of Venice is composed of layers of clay, sometimes traversed by layers of peat, overlying profound strata of watery sand. This clay is, in places, of a remarkably firm consistency; for example, in the quarter of the town known as *Dorsoduro* or "hard-back," and at the spot where the Campanile stood. A bore made at that point brought up a greenish, compact clay mixed with fine shells. This clay, when dried, offered the resisting power of half-baked brick. It is the remarkable firmness of this clay bottom which enabled the Venetians to raise so lofty and so ponderous a structure upon so narrow a foundation.

The builders of the Campanile proceeded as follows. Into this bed of compact clay they first drove piles of about 9½ in. in diameter with a view to still further consolidating, by pressure, the area

selected. That area only extends 1·25 metre, or about 4 ft. beyond the spring of the brickwork shaft of the tower. How deep these piles reach Boni's report does not state. The piles, at the point where he laid the foundations bare, were found to be of white poplar, in remarkably sound condition, retaining their colour, and presenting a closely twisted fibre. The clay in which they were embedded has preserved them almost intact. The piles extended for one row only beyond the superimposed structure. On the top of these piles the builders laid a platform consisting of two layers of oak beams, crosswise. The lower layer runs in the line of the Piazza, east to west, the upper in the line of the Piazzetta, north to south. Each beam is square and a little over 4 in. thick. This oak platform appears to be in bad condition; the timbers are blackened and friable. While the excavation was in progress sea-water burst through the interstices, which had to be plugged.

Upon this platform was laid the foundation proper. This consisted of seven courses of stone of various sizes and of various kinds—sandstone of two qualities, limestone from Istria and Verona, probably taken from older buildings on the mainland, certainly not fresh-hewn from the quarry. The seventh or lowest course was the deepest, and was the only one which escarped, and that but slightly; the remaining six courses were intended to be perpendicular. These

courses varied widely from each other in thickness—from 0·31 to 0·90 centimetres. They were composed of different and ill-assorted stone, and were held together in places by shallow-biting clamps of iron, and by a mortar of white Istrian lime, which, not being hydraulic, and having little affinity for sand, had become disintegrated. Com. Boni calls attention to the careless structure of this foundation proper, and maintains that it was designed to carry a tower of about two-thirds of the actual height imposed upon it, but not more.

Above the foundations proper came the base. This consisted of five courses of stone set in step-wise. These courses of the base were all of the same kind of stone, in fairly regular blocks, and of fairly uniform thickness. They were all intended to be seen, and originally rose from the old brick pavement of the Piazza; but the gradual subsidence of the soil—which is calculated as proceeding at the rate of nearly a metre per 1,000 years—caused two and a half of these stepped courses to disappear, and only two and a half emerged from the present pavement.

Thus the structure upon which the brick shaft of the Campanile rested was composed of (1) the base of five stepped courses, (2) the foundations of seven courses almost perpendicular, (3) the platform of oak beams, and (4) the piles. The height of the foundation, including the base, was 5·02 metres, about 16 ft., or one-twentieth of the height they carried. Not only

is this a very small proportion, but it will be further observed that the tradition of star-shaped supports (*speroni*) to the foundations is destroyed, and that they covered a very restricted area. In fact, the foundations of the Campanile belonged to the primitive or narrow kind. The foundations of the Ducal Palace, on the other hand, belong to the more recent or extended kind. Those foundations do not rest on piles, but on a very broad platform of larch beams—much thicker than the oak beams of the Campanile platform—reposing directly on the clay. Upon this platform, foundations with a distended escarpment were built to carry the walls, the weight of which was thus distributed equally over a wide area.

Little of the old foundations of the Campanile will remain when the work on the new foundations is completed. The primitive piles and platform are to stand; but new piles have been driven in all round the original nucleus, and on them are being laid large blocks of Istrian stone, which will be so deeply bonded into the old foundations that hardly more than a central core of the early work will be left.

Coming now to the shaft of the tower. This was a massive quadrangular, rectangular, equilateral structure of brick. The brickwork at each angle was thickened so as to form a pilaster-buttress, and on each face were three ribs or pilasters connected at the summit with each other and with the angle pilasters by ornamented arches, immediately over

which came the cornice of the shaft upon which the flooring of the bell-chamber eventually rested. These lateral pilasters or ribs are common to the campanili of Venice, but I remember no instance, except in the campanile of S. Simeone Profeta, of more than one pilaster on each face. Inside this outer or main tower were built eight massive pilasters, connected by arches; and the space between what was virtually the outer and the inner tower was used to carry up, not by steps, but by an inclined plane, a passage from the ground to the bell-chamber. Sansovino, speaking of the shaft, and following the *Cronaca Sivos*, says that it was "stabile e soda." Whether he meant by that to affirm that the walls were solid and not built "a sacco," that is rubble walls, as was the case with Chichester tower and with many early buildings in Venice, it is not easy to say; but the fall of the tower has revealed beyond doubt the fact that the walls of the outer tower were built solid. No argument in favour of the rubble-wall theory can be drawn from the vast cloud of dust which, immediately after the fall, covered the Piazza to the depth of about 4 in., for mortar of the firmest hold would pulverise in the process of the collapse, and it is certain that the stump of the shaft, when laid bare, required strong pick strokes to disintegrate it.

The condition of the shaft was not entirely unsatisfactory. The mortar employed came from Padua

and, though defective in cohesion, was in far better condition than the mortar of the foundations. The bricks, to a considerable number, were magnificent Roman brick of an admirable texture and grain, requiring a saw to divide them, and resembling marble in their compactness. These Roman bricks presented various tones of red and yellow; many of them bore inscriptions which have been carefully catalogued. Some showed the imprint of the paws of animals or of birds who trod upon them when they lay still fresh and unbaked by the brick-kilns of Aquileia or Tarvisium, others have the hand-grip dug into them before they were fired. Some are semi-circular, others wedge-shaped, made for the building of arches, others, again, round for the structure of columns. All were large and of excellent quality. They came from the abandoned remains of ancient Roman cities on the mainland—Altinum, Concordia, Opitergium, Aquileia. It has not, so far, been determined whence came the contemporary brick employed to build the shaft. Much of it looks like Trevisan bake, and though inferior to the Roman brick in size and in consistency, it presented, where it came down in unbroken blocks, a fine quality and colour.

The shaft was completed in the reign of Domenico Moresini; the bell-chamber seems to have been added about 1170; it is described as being stumpy and low. It very likely had a squat pyramid on the top, which probably was gilded. This may have been the bell-

chamber and pyramid represented in Breydenbach's "Peregrinatio" of 1486—if, indeed, any reliance is to be placed on these early woodcut illustrations. In the famous design of Venice, dated 1500, and now attributed to Jacopo de' Barbari, the bell-chamber appears without a pyramid. This may be accounted for by the fact that in 1489 the tower was struck by lightning, and the summit burned, "e una saetta uno ictu bruciò la cima del Campaniel de San Marco, che era dorata." The government then confided the restorations to the master builder Bartolomeo Buono of Bergamo, who began the work about 1510, and constructed the bell-chamber, attic, pyramid, and angel, as they practically remained till the fall of the tower. The work seems to have been completed by 1513, for Sanudo, in his Diary, makes the following entry: "1513, 6th July. To-day in the Piazza of St. Mark the gilded copper angel was hoisted up to the sound of trumpets and pipes. Wine and milk were poured upon it in token of rejoicing. Pray God it has been raised in a happy hour and to the increase of this Republic." Buono's bell-chamber was an elegant structure of Istrian stone with angle pilasters and columns of *verd antique* and other precious marbles on each side, corresponding to the three pilaster ribs of the shaft, and connected, like them, by arches which bore the cornice, upon which rested the heavy attic whence sprang the final pyramid. In the spandrils between the arches were massive

lions' heads, boldly and impressively hewn in Istrian stone.

The bell-chamber contained four large bells thus described by the Procurators of St. Mark, the official custodians of the Campanile: "In the said Campanile are four bells, all of an excellent sound; the smallest is called the *Trottiera*, the next is known as the *Mezza Terza*, the third as the *Nona*, and the fourth and largest is called the *Marangona*." Sansovina adds a fifth, a small bell, by name the *Ringhiera*. The *Marangona* was the great bell of the city marking the main moments of the day; it rang at sunrise, at *Ave Maria* for the cessation of work, and at midnight. The *Trottiera* summoned the senate to its sittings; the *Ringhiera* tolled for those about to die by the hand of justice. The *Mezza Terza* and the *Nona* announced other important hours; the *Nona*, for example, rang midday. All these bells were rung either by hammer in the bell-chamber or by rope from the base of the Campanile. The holes through which the bell-ropes passed were coated with thick bottle-glass to diminish the wear and tear. In the fall of the tower the *Marangona* was but little injured; the rest were broken.

Above the bell-chamber came a balustrade, and inside that the attic. It was built of brick, and bore upon its western and eastern faces a massive decorative figure in Istrian stone. Both represented Justice—the figure to the west reposed its feet on a cherub's

head, flanked by two other human heads; the figure to the east rested on a dragon. Both were designed, like the lions of the spandrils, by Mastro Buono.

The pyramid was also of brickwork externally lined with plates of bronze which had acquired an exquisite green *patina*. Inside the pyramid was a shallow cupola, through the crown of which passed the pivot on which the angel at the apex of the pyramid revolved. Surmounting all came the great angel of gilded lead—it had been renewed several times, and in various metals—with wings expanded to catch the impact of every wind that blew.

Such was the tower which the Venetians built for themselves. It consisted of eight parts: (1) the piles, (2) the platform, (3) the foundations, (4) the base, (5) the shaft, (6) the bell-chamber, (7) the attic, (8) the pyramid; divisions which are to be found in almost all the Venetian campanili, whether the attic be round as in San Giorgio Maggiore, or octagonal as in San Stefano, or square as in San Francesco della Vigna, and whether it be surmounted by cone, pyramid, or cupola. The attic with its cone, pyramid, or cupola, however, are sometimes wanting altogether, sometimes are merely rudimentary.

In a peculiar fashion the Campanile of San Marco summed up the whole life of the city—civil, religious, commercial, and military—and became the central point of Venetian sentiment. For the tower served the double needs of the ecclesiastic and the civic

sides of the Republic. "His diebus," says Andrea Dandolo, "excelsa turris condita est usibus ecclesiæ et Reipublicæ deputata." Its bells marked the canonical hours; rang the workman to his work, the merchant to his desk, the statesman to the Senate; they pealed for victory or tolled for the demise of a Doge. The tower, moreover, during the long course of its construction, roughly speaking, from the middle of the tenth to the opening of the sixteenth centuries, was contemporary with all that was greatest in Venetian history; for the close of the tenth century saw the conquest of Dalmatia, and the foundations of Venetian supremacy in the Adriatic—that water-avenue to the Levant and the Orient—while by the opening of the sixteenth the Cape route had been discovered, the League of Cambray was in sight, and the end at hand. The tower, too, was a landmark to those at sea, and when the mariner had the Campanile of San Nicolò on the Lido covering the Campanile of St. Mark, he knew he had the route home and could make the Lido port. The tower was the centre of popular festivals, such as that of the *Svolo* on *Giovedì grasso*, when an acrobat descended by a rope from the summit of the Campanile to the feet of the Doge, who was a spectator from the loggia of the Ducal Palace. Vasari might say that "this tower, in truth, has nothing excellent about it in itself, neither in form nor adornment, nor in anything else that is laudable"; but visitors from the North, like Fynes

Moryson and Coryat, wax eloquent over the Campanile and the view from it—the “fairest and the goodliest prospect that is (I think) in all the worlde, for therehence may you see the whole modell and forme of the citie *sub uno intuitu*, a sight that doth in my opinion farre surpasse all shewes under the cope of heaven”; while for the Venetians the tower was officially, “*famosum et nominatum per totum orbem*,” as the Great Council declared in 1405, and for the people a personification of enduring strength, “*Gnanca se cascasse el Campaniel*,” “Not though the Campanile should come down,” was their strongest form of negation.

The Campanile was under the care of the *Procuratori di San Marco*, and they insisted on preserving the prestige of their charge by preventing the erection of any tower in the city which should surpass it in height. Whether they were as careful of its structure is doubtful, and the tower had many enemies during the course of its life. From the first there seem to have been houses attached to its base. We have seen that the hospital founded by the sainted Orseolo Doge was possibly connected with the shaft. We know that Giorgio Valla, the scholar, kept a school at its foot, that the *panataria* or bakery stood on its south side, and that the disfiguring shops and offices were only cleared away in October, 1878. Neither the erection nor the removal of these buildings, with all the tapping at the tower thereby im-

plied, can have been of advantage to the structure, and, indeed, it was the meddling with the remaining building on the fourth side, the Loggetta, which precipitated the disaster of July 14th. But the Campanile suffered most from fire, lightning, and earthquake. The long series of accidents is recorded in Gallicciolli's *Memorie Venete* and elsewhere. Here it will suffice to mention the most important. In 1383 lightning set fire to the wooden pyramid on the tower, which was promptly grappled with chains and ropes and hauled, still flaming, down into the Piazza. In 1405 the illuminations for the capture of Padua again fired and burned the summit. In 1426 all the shops round the base of the tower were burned, and in 1489 the top was once more destroyed by fire, and, as we have seen, restored in its final form by Mastro Buono. In 1574 another fire raged at the foot of the Campanile. Finally, in 1745, a terrible flash of lightning struck the tower at a spot above the Loggetta, precisely where the final and fatal crack of July 14th began to show itself. That spot had been struck before, in 1735, and was struck again in 1761. The *Procuratori* then charged the engineer Toaldo to apply a lightning-conductor, and that was done in 1776.

The most serious of the many earthquakes which shook the tower was that of 1511. The top of the Campanile, especially at a point where it had already been struck by lightning, showed serious cracks.

The great bells rang of themselves, and the use of them was suspended until they had been fortified by beams. After this shock the foundations were examined and found to be in excellent order, and declared capable of bearing a much greater weight. It will be remembered that this earthquake took place just at the time when Mastro Buono was contemplating the new bell-chamber, attic, and pyramid. In order to carry out this work, a portion of the tower at the north-east angle, looking towards the *Merceria*, was taken down and rebuilt. It was precisely at this angle that the final mischief declared itself, though much lower down, and it is not unlikely that the fatal weakness of the tower may date from the earthquake of 1511 and the restorations entailed thereby.

Other earthquakes followed, but none so damaging to the Campanile. Yet, in spite of lightning, fire, earthquake, and the lapse of time, the great tower of St. Mark showed only the faintest deviation from the perpendicular, and, at the time of its fall, it seemed to almost every expert, and certainly to all the profane, the soundest building in Venice.

Professor Max Ongaro has recently published an interesting brochure entitled *Come è caduta il Campanile di San Marco*. In estimating the reasons for the collapse of the tower, Signor Ongaro, along with all other competent authorities, absolutely excludes the theory that the foundations were to blame. They

were narrow, it is true, for the great height and weight which were eventually laid upon them, and they were defective in construction and in cohesion, but the fault does not lie with the foundations. A serious weakness was created in the upper part of the tower by the imperfect way in which the new surface, applied after the earthquake of 1511 and the lightning stroke of 1745, was bonded into the older *massif* of the tower. The new work remained like an outer veneer, giving an appearance of solidity, but as a matter of fact structurally detached from the main block of the shaft. The same vicious procedure seems to have been adopted in all the refacings of the Campanile. But Signor Ongaro is inclined to attribute the collapse of the monument more immediately to the modifications made in the basement to suit the convenience of the *custode*. It will be remembered that the inner shell of the tower was composed of eight pilasters. Two of these—one at the north-east angle, the other on the east side, precisely the point where the fatal mischief manifested itself—were deeply incised to make a chimney for the kitchen and a wall cupboard. These cuts seriously weakened the two pilasters, and movement was manifested higher up the shaft. Local remedies were applied, but the root of the mischief was neither sought nor eradicated. The equilibrium of the outer and inner shells was destroyed, a downward drag was set up, and this, coupled with the

defective mortar of the tower, led gradually to the disintegration and collapse of the north-east angle and face.

We come now to the dolorous moment of the fall in July, 1902. Infiltration of water had been observed in the roof of Sansovino's Loggetta where that roof joined the shaft of the Campanile. At this point a thin ledge of stone, let into the wall of the Campanile, projected over the junction between the leaden roof of the Loggetta and the shaft of the tower. In order to remedy the mischief of infiltration it was resolved to remove and replace this projecting ledge. To do this a chase was made in the wall of the Campanile, which, at this point, consisted of a comparatively modern surface of masonry, placed there to repair the damage caused by the lightning strokes above recorded. This chase was cut, not piecemeal, but continuously. The work was carried out on Monday, July 7th. During the process the architect in charge became alarmed at the condition of the inner part of the wall laid bare by the cut. He expressed his fears to his superiors, but apparently no examination of the tower was made till the Thursday following. Even then the imminence of the danger does not seem to have been grasped. On Saturday, the 12th, a crack was observed spreading upwards in a sloping direction from the cut above the roof of the Loggetta towards the north-east angle of the shaft, then crossing the angle

and running up almost perpendicularly in the line of the little windows that gave light to the internal passage from the base to the bell-chamber. This crack assumed such a threatening aspect, and was making such visible progress, that the authorities in charge of the tower felt bound to inform the Prefect, though the danger was represented as not immediate, and the worst they expected was the fall of the angle where the crack had appeared. A complete collapse of the whole tower was absolutely excluded. As a precautionary measure the music in the Piazza was suspended on Saturday evening. On Sunday orders were issued to endeavour to bind the threatened angle. But by Monday morning early (July 14th) it was evident that the catastrophe could not be averted. Dust began to pour out of the widening crack, and bricks to fall. A block of Istrian stone crashed down from the bell-chamber, then a column from the same site. At 9.47 the ominous fissure opened, the face of the Campanile towards the church and the Ducal Palace bulged out, the angel on the top and the pyramid below it swayed once or twice, and threatened to crush either the Sansovino's Library or the Basilica of San Marco in their fall, then the whole colossus subsided gently, almost noiselessly, upon itself, as it were in a curtsy, the ruined brick and mortar spread out in a pyramidal heap, a dense column of white powder rose from the Piazza, and the Campanile of San Marco was no more.



LIBRERIA VECCHIA

SHOWING THE DAMAGE DONE BY THE FALL OF THE CAMPANILE, JULY 14TH, 1902

It is certainly remarkable, and by the *popolo* of Venice it is reckoned as a miracle, that the tower in its fall did so little harm. Not a single life was lost, though the crowd in the Piazza was unaware of its danger till about ten minutes before the catastrophe. The great angel shot down and stopped just before the main portal of St. Mark's; the thick porphyry column of the *Pietra del bando* saved, as by a miracle, the exquisite south-west, or Sta. Sofia, angle of the church; the copper plates from the pyramid formed themselves into a miraculous fence for the first of the great bronze standard sockets. Only a deep cut into Sansovino's splendidly built library, and a few chips on the outer steps of St. Mark's façade, hint at the ruin which might have been wrought, and the people, commenting on these facts, and personifying the tower they loved so well, say, "Lu xè sempre stà galantomo, lu ga parlà; lu ga avisà, 'fè largo che casco'"—"He's always been a gentleman; he spoke, he warned us: 'Away with you, for I'm coming down!'"

The Campanile of St. Mark's is not the first, nor, I fear, will it be the last of the Venetian towers to fall. In 1347 the Campanile of Chioggia collapsed, as an inscription over the door leading into the tower records. In 1410 a violent gust of wind, "un refolo grandissimo," brought down the towers of Santa Fosca and the Corpus Domini. In 1455 the Campanile of S. Angelo, which was off plumb, was

rectified by a Bolognese engineer, but fell the next day, carrying with it a part of the church and the Convent of San Stefano. In 1596 the Campanile of San Leonardo fell. In 1774 the great tower of San Giorgio Maggiore came down, and the ruin roused hardly less alarm than was created by the fall of San Marco. The towers of San Stefano, S. Maria Zobenigo, and the Greci were examined, and the tower of S. Maria was demolished; the other two remain to this day, though their deflection is a constant source of alarm. The latest to fall was the Campanile of Sta. Tèrnità, which collapsed as recently as the 13th December, 1880.

The restoration of the Campanile of Saint Mark will not present difficulties of other than a financial and structural nature, for the great tower was a simple monument, impressive by its bulk and venerable from its associations; but in its fall it swept away another building of a very different character—the Loggetta of Sansovino. This small but exquisite structure depended for its effect neither upon its size nor upon its associations, but upon the delicacy and richness of its workmanship and ornamentation. Like the little Gothic church of S. Maria della Spina at Pisa, it seemed a carefully-wrought jewel in a setting of larger and more imposing buildings.

The Loggetta was designed and executed about the year 1540 by Jacopo Sansovino, who had recently finished his masterpiece, the *Libreria Vecchia*. It was



THE MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. JOHN

In the Loggetta

intended to take the place of an older building which had been destroyed in 1489 by the famous flash of lightning that struck and brought down a large part of the bell-chamber on the Campanile. The more ancient Loggetta served as a kind of club or *rendez-vous* for the patricians of Venice, but on the completion of the new edifice it was set apart for the *Procuratore di San Marco* on duty and his guard, who kept watch during the sittings of the *Maggior Consiglio*. After the fall of the Republic, and down to the present day, the Loggetta was used for the drawing of the governmental lottery every Saturday at three o'clock.

The Loggetta, as designed by Sansovino, consisted of a terrace or open vestibule, reached by four steps from the level of the Piazza, and enclosed by a balustrade. The fine bronze gates, with their rich and florid modelling, were added much later, in 1750, by the artist Antonio Gai. From the terrace sprang the façade of the building. Eight columns of oriental breccia, in groups of two, flanked and divided the three arches of the front, and carried a somewhat heavy attic. In the four intercolumnar spaces were four niches with four bronze statues, the work of Sansovino, representing Pallas, Apollo, Mercury, and Peace, to which the sculptor's son, Francesco Sansovino, gives a fanciful interpretation laudatory of the Republic. These figures, though damaged, are not

destroyed, and may take their place again if the Loggetta is reconstructed. The three main divisions of the attic, corresponding to the three arches below, contained bas-reliefs. In the centre Venice, figured as Justice, sat throned upon her lions, while the rivers of the mainland poured riches at her feet. On the right was Venus, the symbol of Cyprus; on the left was Jove representing his birthplace Crete, the two great maritime possessions of the Republic. The rest of the façade was richly adorned with bas-reliefs and columns and balustrades, and the whole structure, with its breccia pillars, its deep green bronze and Verona marbles of red and white, formed a glowing and sumptuous base to the austere shaft of the Campanile that towered above it.

Inside the Loggetta was the guard-chamber, with vaulted and coffered ceiling, and a beautiful group, in terra cotta, of the Madonna and Child with St. John, by Sansovino, now completely destroyed. It is much to be regretted that, when the danger to the Campanile was first observed, no steps were taken to place in security at least this terra-cotta group, the bronze statues, and the gates.

Other work of Sansovino besides the Loggetta has suffered by the collapse of the Campanile. The lateral bays of his noble Library have been cut clean through; yet the angle pilasters with the superimposed obelisk stand there, almost isolated but not

fallen, a splendid testimony to the sound workmanship of the great renaissance architect.

The Campanile will be restored, and future generations will, perhaps, hardly distinguish between the old and the new; but in the case of the Loggetta, though much of the original work has escaped entire destruction, it is doubtful whether a restoration can ever recapture the touch of the master hand.

THE TWIN COLUMNS OF THE PIAZZETTA

I. THE COLUMN OF ST. MARK

IN 1891 the winged Lion of St. Mark, the famous symbol of the Venetian Republic, which crowns one of the twin columns in the Piazzetta, was in urgent need of repair. Intense frosts had called attention to the dangerous state of the whole monument. Pieces of stonework, stained by iron rust, had begun to fall from the abacus of the column, and an examination of the structure was ordered by the Government. An inspection of the lion, the capital, and the shaft showed that all three were seriously damaged by time or by original faults of construction. The lion was a mass of disconnected fragments, bound together by iron bands, which had rusted and wrought havoc; the abacus and capital were split and rent in many directions; and one serious fissure had spread downwards to the shaft itself. In describing what was done, it will be as well to take the lion and the column apart from one another.

The first operation after erecting the scaffolding

round the column was to raise the lion and to place him on transverse beams, so that he reposed quite detached from the abacus upon which he originally stood. This operation was necessary for two reasons: first, the lion itself, if it was to be restored, would have to be lowered to the ground; and, secondly, no restoration of the riven capital was possible while the lion was *in situ*.

The lion is made of bronze. There is a tradition among the Venetian people that its eyes are diamonds; they are really white agates, faceted. Its mane is most elaborately wrought, and its retracted, gaping mouth, with its fierce moustaches—one of them renewed—gives it an oriental aspect. It is clear that the whole creature, as it now stands, belongs to many different epochs, varying from some date previous to our era down to this century. These epochs have been roughly indicated by the shaded portions on the accompanying sketch. The head except the crown, the mane, the larger part of the body, and the legs except the paws, are evidently much older than any other part of the figure. It is conjectured that the lion may have formed a part of the decoration of some Assyrian palace before it became the symbol of the Venetian patron saint. St. Mark's lion it certainly was not originally, for it was made to stand level upon the ground, and had to be raised up in front to allow the Evangel to be slipped under its fore-paws. The wings, of poor

workmanship, and the paws, very well modelled, are of much later date; while the rump and part of the tail are restorations executed after the lion had been sent back from Paris early in last century. The condition of the most ancient portion is deplorable. There are rents and fissures everywhere, and the



whole is held together by iron rivets which have rusted away. Upon the lion's body are various initials, presumably those of the artists employed in its many restorations.

The column has proved no less interesting than the lion. The shaft is made of one block of grey granite, and tapers slightly. It is 1.53 centimetres at the base, and 1.35 at the top. The shaft is crowned by a capital and abacus upon which the lion stood. The column was off plumb 36 centimetres

at its extreme deflection ; and the difference between the centres of the upper and the lower circumferences was $27\frac{1}{2}$ centimetres. But not only was the column thus seriously out of the perpendicular, it was not even firm on its base. When the lion was raised and suspended above the abacus, one of the workmen, stepping from the scaffolding on to the column, suddenly drew back again, and said, "Mi par che balla sta colonna" ("I declare the column is shaky"). This proved to be the case. There was a constant oscillation of the shaft, and the work had to be conducted with the greatest care. As a matter of fact, this shaft was originally placed flush upon its platform of stonework without any support whatsoever—it was not even sunk into the platform ; and it stood there all those centuries, resisting wind, water, and earthquake simply by its own weight. But a serious process of disintegration had been going on in the platform. It was possible to take a thin stick, and to pass it, at certain places, between the shaft and the stonework on which it stood. The shaft no longer rested equally all over its circumference ; and no one knew upon how much or how little the whole structure reposed.

Anyone looking at the capital and abacus would probably take it for granted that both were of solid stone throughout. But this is not so. To begin with the abacus. It is divided into three courses. The first or uppermost course, on which

the lion stands, is composed of twenty-eight different bits of stone, clamped together with iron. The construction was faulty, for the rain could penetrate between the joints, and the iron clamps as they oxidised wrought damage to the stonework, while the stone itself is of an inferior quality of Verona. The second course is not even stone throughout. It consists of an edging of various fragments of stone, also clamped together with iron ; but the centre is filled with brick-and-mortar work. The third and lowest course is composed in the same way, of blocks of stone surrounding brickwork. The capital also, though made of one solid block of stone, was found to have been hollowed out, and filled in subsequently with the same quality of brickwork as that found in the second and third courses of the abacus. The rim of stone in the capital is comparatively thin, it varies between twenty and seventeen centimetres in thickness. The capital, before it was raised to its position on the column, must have looked like one of the familiar well-heads, so common in Venice. It is not easy to explain why the capital should have been hollowed out, unless the architect intended to make it easier to raise to its resting-place ; but the men who were able to hoist the column to the perpendicular were hardly likely to have shrunk before the far lighter weight of the capital. However that may be, this faulty construction of abacus and capital caused the damage which

rendered the monument insecure. The rain and damp slowly penetrated through the abacus to the capital, and rent the latter into fragments.

The condition of the column was as follows. The plummet line from the top of the shaft, below the capital, to its base on the pedestal showed an inclination of 27.5 centimetres towards the south-east—that is, towards the molo and the lagoon. This inclination had been caused by a subsidence of the pedestal on the south-eastern side to the extent of three centimetres, so that the north-western corner of the pedestal was three centimetres higher than the south-eastern corner. The pedestal upon which the shaft rests was composed of five parts, which a reference to the sketch will explain. First, a large square block of Istrian stone (A), circumscribed by the circumference of the shaft. It is upon this block A that the column really rests. B, C, D, and E are four blocks of stone extending beyond the circumference of the shaft, visible to the eye, and carved with rude figures of animals. These four blocks are independent of the column, can be, and two have been, removed without affecting the stability of the shaft. The Government required that these four blocks, with their ancient carving, should not be renewed, but should be preserved as they are. But block A, the true foundation of the shaft, had suffered corrosion through time and the filtration of water. It was no longer perfectly square, nor was its upper surface

and to raise it by means of powerful screw-jacks placed between the upper casing and a strong scaffolding resting on the ground. But while this plan was under discussion, it occurred to Signor Vendrasco that he might pass a copper bar through the axis of the shaft, between it and block A, and by thus balancing the whole shaft upon this rod, he might compel it to return to the perpendicular. The suggestion was one of complete novelty, no little danger, and considerable difficulty; but the attempt was made. The inequalities in the upper surface of block A allowed Signor Vendrasco to work and smooth away a level bed into which he inserted a copper bar (FF) five millimetres in thickness, and thirty millimetres in width. But when that was done a serious difficulty still remained. The whole pedestal had sunk, as we have seen, three centimetres at its south-east angle. Before the shaft could be balanced on the rod FF, and then compelled to resume the perpendicular, it was necessary to remove at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ centimetres of stone pedestal on the north-western angle. In order to do this in safety, and to prevent the column coming over too rapidly, as its north-western support was cut away, it was necessary to place two large composite blocks of wood (HH) under the portions of the column which projected beyond the central stone block A. These blocks (HH) were driven tight up to block A, and so wedged under the column that they really

came to support it on that side. At the same time they were so constructed that the various wedges which composed them could be gradually withdrawn, allowing the column to settle gently towards the north-west as soon as it was balanced upon the rod FF. When this had been done the operation of cutting away the north-west surface of the pedestal was carried out. The thin end of a large copper wedge (K) was inserted at the south-eastern corner—the part that had to be raised—and all was ready for the final operation of causing these eighty tons of granite to return to their original rectitude.

The operation took three days to carry out. The first two Signor Vendrasco passed alone, with his workmen, inside the little enclosure which shut the sauntering public out from the works, and left them unconscious that the huge granite monolith was literally tottering over the pavement which they trod. Little by little the copper wedge was driven in between block A and the base of the shaft; and little by little the wedges of H and H were withdrawn; little by little the shaft rose on the one side and sank on the other, till, of the 27.5 centimetres of inclination, 15 had been rectified, and Signor Vendrasco was able to say, "I am master of the column; she obeys me as I choose." On the second day five more centimetres were rectified, and preparations were made for receiving the authorities. On the third day they came. In less than twenty

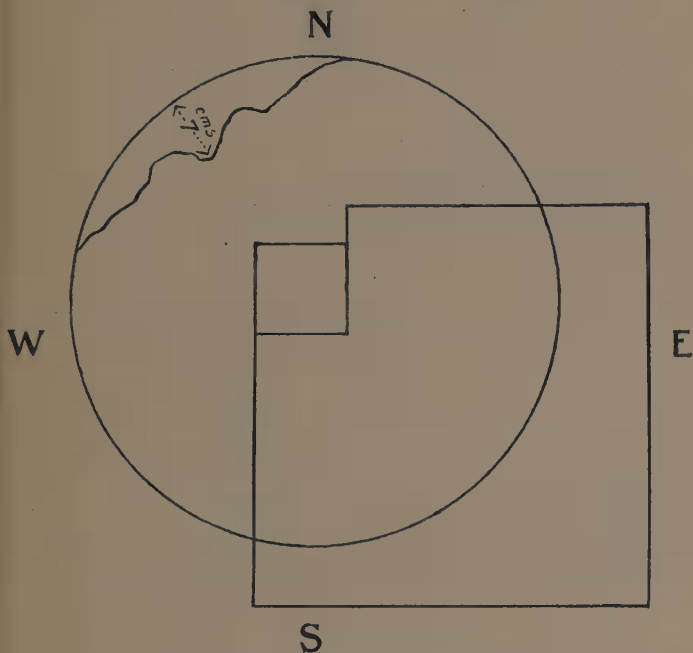
minutes the remaining 7.5 centimetres were corrected, and the shaft stood perpendicular once more, resting upon the rod FF in its diameter, and upon wedges K and HH at its circumference. The whole operation proved triumphantly successful ; and Signor Vendrasco has every reason to be proud of his intuition into what the column required. Nothing now remained to be done except to fill in the narrow space between the block A and the base of the shaft with plates of copper, to restore blocks C and E, to replace the capital and the lion, and then the column stood up again, in greater security than ever, as one of the chief glories of the Piazza.

II. THE THEODORE COLUMN

THE Theodore Column was less seriously off plumb than its brother of the Lion. But this advantage was nullified by two facts: first, the Theodore Column tapers less than the Lion Column, and therefore the deflection from the perpendicular was the more serious; secondly, the lower portion of the Theodore Column on the north-west side was broken away to the height of a metre from the pedestal, and to the depth of seven centimetres, depriving the column of much of its stability.

Notwithstanding the greater difficulties thus presented, Signor Vendrasco resolved to pursue the method adopted for the rectification of the Lion Column, and by wedges on the one side and excision on the other to cause the column to resume the perpendicular; but the rotten condition of the north-west lower portion of the shaft rendered this operation so dangerous that it was impossible to attempt it with a free-swinging column as in the case of the twin pillar; and before it could be undertaken Signor

Vendrasco found himself obliged to encase the shaft, and to support it by great beams, eight in all, which sloped out from the column with their butt-



THE BASE OF THE SHAFT AND PEDESTAL
OF THE THEODORE COLUMN

ends resting on solid masonry constructed for the purpose.

When this fortification had been completed the operations on the statue, the capital, the column, and the pedestal began. St. Theodore was loosened from

his stand on the capital, and raised into the air by pulleys, previous to being lowered down an incline-plane to the ground.

Then one bright, breezy afternoon, while all the water between the Molo and San Giorgio was dancing in sunlight, a large crowd gathered outside the barricade which kept them at a safe distance from the unstable column and allowed the men to carry out their work. Inside the barricade Signor Vendrasco, his hands behind his back, promenaded up and down, directing his men by a sign now and then, but walking as though he saw no one of the curious faces that divided their gaze between the saint in the air and the engineer on the earth. Slowly the cords round the windlass were relaxed, and with odd little jerks the stone figure slid down the sloping path, a strange inert and helpless mass relieved against the brilliant sky. At last amid breathless silence St. Theodore came within reach of the ground. Signor Vendrasco walked deliberately up to him, pushed him gently by the shoulders till he settled down upright on the trolley; a sigh of relief went up from the crowd; some boys gave a whoop, and the spectators dispersed about the broad Piazza.

Later on in the afternoon, after a long and laborious journey across the Molo, the saint made a sort of triumphal entry into the Ducal Palace by the southern door; his Roman head, his cuirass, spear, and shield stood out in high relief against the background of

lagoon and sky. There was something stately and antique in his leisurely progress through the vaulted passage to the inner courtyard.

On examination it was found that the statue consisted of many different pieces. The only true antique is the thorax with its carved cuirass, which must have belonged to some late Roman portrait statue. The head and neck are of one block, the cuirass and body of another; the stunted ungainly legs with a bit of the animal on which they stand are still another; the arms are a fourth block. The shield is of Istrian stone, the rest of Greek marble. The fish—crocodile, or whatever it may represent—was a mass of separate fragments rudely clamped together: over fifty pieces in all. These have now been strung, as it were, upon a bronze bar passed right through them all.

The abacus and capital of the column are similar to those of the Lion Column. The capital is hollow. It is the shaft of red Egyptian granite, however, and the pedestal on which it stands, that offer the most interesting points, and prove once again how erroneous is the statement that "the ancients worked with greater care than the moderns." The damage at the north-west base of the shaft, to which reference has already been made, in all probability existed at the time when the shaft was raised to the perpendicular, late in the twelfth century. At each end of the shaft is a square hole, whether made by the first

workers on the column when it was hewn from its bed of living granite, so as to allow them to turn and round it more easily, we cannot say ; but the presence of this hole at the base of the shaft suggested to the engineer who first raised it to the perpendicular, a means by which he might counteract the defect at the butt-end of the column. Into the hole he soldered a square bar of iron, which projected about fifteen centimetres beyond the base ; and in the centre of the pedestal he placed a square block of red Verona *brocatello* marble, in which he cut a hole to receive the projecting portion of the iron bar. But this block of stone was so thin at the bottom of the hole—only ten centimetres thick—that when the column was raised to position and the iron bar went into the hole, the weight of the shaft crushed the marble to fragments and left the column resting on the outer stones of the pedestal and exposed to all the dangers of instability consequent on its defective north-west side. Moreover, had the iron bar fitted freely into the socket without crushing the marble, its penetration of the shaft and pedestal was too shallow to have been of any real service. It is little less than a miracle that the column maintained its equilibrium, in spite of settlements and shocks of earthquakes, for so many centuries.

Of course these facts were not discovered till Signor Vendrasco began to attack the pedestal after swinging the shaft to the perpendicular. Then, as

the circumference stones of the pedestal were removed, leaving the column suspended in the air and supported by the great timber balks on all sides of it, the block of red Verona in the centre was discovered. The engineer hoped that no iron plug existed, and that he would be able to leave the central block; but the crowbar soon revealed the existence of the iron rod and all the disintegrating consequences of the contact of iron and stone. The problem then arose—how was this bar, firmly soldered into the base of the shaft, to be removed. The block of Verona was carefully chiselled away, and in doing so various small copper coins came to light. It was possible to crawl right under the shaft, between its base and the pedestal. Application was made to the gas-works for a pipe and gas jet; but difficulties arose. Then Signor Vendrasco procured four benzine blow-lamps, and at ten o'clock in the morning the flames were applied to the iron bar. After an hour and a half, however, it was clear that these lamps did not produce sufficient heat to melt the soldering, though the lead was considerably softened. Iron hooks were then procured and heated red-hot, and with these they began to pick out the softened lead. About one o'clock the iron bar dropped gently out of its socket.

Nothing more remained to be done save to supply a new central block and to fit in the four circumference stones, which form the real pedestal on which

the column rests, and to remedy the defect at the north-west corner by four metal brackets. When that was done, the original steps of the pedestal, with their quaint, debruised groups of figures, were replaced ; the four brackets were concealed by a piece of Egyptian marble of the same quality as the shaft.

St. Theodore was hoisted to his loft again, and, in concert with his brother of the Lion Column, began a new period of watch and ward over Piazza, Molo, and lagoon.

SOME VENETIAN KNOCKERS

ONE of the most remarkable features in the history of Venice is the continuity of its life as illustrated by its buildings, its sculpture, its ornamental work, whether in bronze or stone, that adorns its churches and palaces. Most great cities of Europe have undergone such changes that, to all intents and purposes, they are modern as far as their exterior is concerned. It is not so with Venice yet, in spite of the general tendency to modernise and restore. Thanks to her isolated position and to the very gradual process of her decay, Venice still possesses buildings and decorations which belong to almost every period of her history, from the tenth century down to the present date. And among other ornaments of the Venetian palaces, the bronze knockers on the doors are a proof of this conservative quality in two ways; for knockers of very various dates are still in use, and further, the type of the knocker form hardly changes at all.

There was, and still is, a large school of bronze-founders in Venice. The earliest monument of this school is the large outer gate in the centre of the

façade of St. Mark's, which bears the following inscription: "MCCC . MAGISTER . BERTUCCIUS . AURIFEX . VENETUS . ME . FECIT"; and among the finest work which this school of bronze-founders produced, we must reckon the knockers on the palace doors.

Of the great knockers only a few remain in their original places. Most of them have found their way to the antiquity shops, and have passed out of Venice. But about the middle of the eighteenth century, in 1758, while the Republic was still alive—in outward form, at least—it occurred to a Venetian nobleman, Pietro Gradenigo, to collect the most remarkable knockers then in Venice in a series of water-colour sketches, executed for him by a German artist. The original volume of sketches is preserved in the Museo Civico, and has been reproduced by Sig. Brusa. It bears the following title-page: "Battaori, Batticoli e Battioli in Venezia. Jo. Grevembroch del. 1758."

In Venice we may distinguish two parent forms of knocker, from one or the other of which all the knockers, the simplest as well as the most elaborate, are derived. These two forms are the hammer and the ring. The hammer form consists of a hinge and a flapper attached to the door, and falling on a nail-head. A few of these knockers are still to be found, chiefly on the houses of the poorer classes, and in the less-frequented quarters of Venice; and they are still common at Malamocco. When the Venetians, a seafaring people and drawing their life from

the sea, began to develop and ornament the flapper, they converted it into a rude image of a dolphin. The dolphin was sometimes worked out with scales and fins and head; sometimes his body was left almost untouched; but in every case the tail, which was attached to the hinge, was well defined and curled up. In Venice itself this form of the hammer-knocker, the *battaor*, as it is called, was hardly ever worked out into any elaborate decoration.

The second primitive form—the ring knocker, or *campanella*, as the Venetians called it—consisted originally of a ring, fastened in an eye, and falling upon a nail-head. This is the common form which the knocker assumed in Venice; and from this second parent form came all the elaborate developments of the knocker which I propose to trace. The ring soon lost the simplicity of its circle, which was broken first of all into a horseshoe. A very fine specimen of this earliest modification of the ring may be seen on the Cà Foscolo at San Stefano; and, as a second, I select the knocker on the Palazzo Priuli at Santa Maria Nuova, which bears the date 1582. This Priuli knocker is, decoratively, an advance on that of the Cà Foscolo. That is perfectly plain except for the piercings of the nail-holes in the horseshoe; but the Priuli knocker is broken by rude foliation, and the nail-head upon which the knocker fell is supposed to have raised a boss on the outside of the knocker at its base; and, further, the ends of the horseshoe

have been produced and curved, and terminate in rosettes. In the knocker on the cloister of Santa Maria Nuova we see that the idea of a horseshoe has disappeared, though its general form has been retained: the foliation has spread all round the ring, covering the nail-holes; the boss has been isolated, and has acquired a character of its own; and the rosettes have been developed into rams' heads. The knocker of the Palazzo Ottobon at San Severo has suffered a further rupture; its outer sides have been broken into two curves instead of one, and the open central space is filled with the Ottobon coat-of-arms, per bend, azure and vert, a bend argent, on a chief or, a double-headed eagle crowned sable, the whole surmounted by a papal tiara and keys in memory of Peter Ottobon, Pope Alexander VIII. Ottobon was Pope from the year 1689 to 1691, so that the date of this knocker is determined as not earlier than the close of the seventeenth century. The story of the Ottobon family is curious and almost unique in the history of the Venetian patriciate. They were admitted as nobles of the Great Council in the year 1646, as a reward for the large sums of money they had advanced to the Treasury. The elevation of Peter Ottobon to the Papal throne drew many of the family to Rome; and in the year 1710 one of the Ottoboni, in spite of admonitions from Venice, accepted the office of Protector of the Crown of France at the Papal court, whereupon the name was

erased from the Libro d'Oro, and the family degraded again.

Hitherto the main idea of the horseshoe has been maintained in the knockers that have been cited; the horseshoe was foliated in one case and broken into two curves in another, it is true, but, on the whole, the original conception has been preserved. In the following specimens, however, even the outline disappears in heavy ornamentation, and little of the parent design survives, except a suggestion of its general form. Take, for example, the knocker of the Palazzo Grimani at San Luca, where the outer circle is wrought up into dolphins holding a mask between them. The mask has taken the place of the boss, which used to mark where the knocker fell. It was in this Palazzo Grimani that one of the most celebrated ceremonies of the Republic took place—the coronation of Morosina Morosini, wife of the Doge, Marino Grimani. So lavish was the expenditure on this occasion, and so magnificent the procession which accompanied the Duchess from her palace, down the Merceria, round the Piazza, and up to the high altar of St. Mark's, that the Government expressed their accustomed jealousy of such pre-eminence by forbidding the public coronation of the Dogressa for the future. That was in the year 1597, and the palace to which this knocker belongs is hardly older than that date; it is the work of Sammichele, and was begun in 1595. If we ascribe

the knocker to the same date as the palace—and that is a doubtful step—then this Grimani knocker is considerably earlier than the Ottobon knocker previously cited. But whether earlier in date or not, the Grimani knocker is certainly further down the road of modification which the original ring pursued, and rightly follows the Ottobon knocker in any history of the knocker's development.

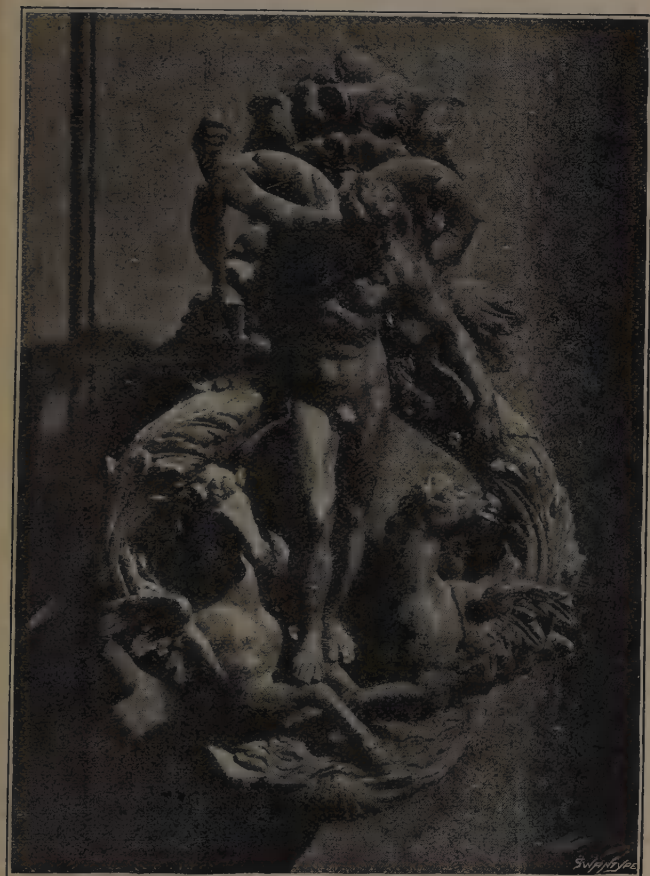
Another and a very beautiful instance of the same modification of the horseshoe into animal and figure designs is the knocker of the Palazzo Longo at the Servi. A Hercules fills the central space, and two lions form the outer circle. The lions refer to the Longo coat-of-arms, argent, a lion rampant sable. The original coat of the family was argent, a lion rampant gules; over all a fesse azure. When and why this change of coat was made is not quite clear, but it probably happened in the year 1310, after the suppression of the great conspiracy of Tiepolo, in which the Longhi took a part. We find the palace of the Longhi among the list of those that were sold and stamped with a St. Mark in stone, as a punishment for the share their owners had in that rebellion. The Longhi at that time were a *famiglia cittadina*; seventy years later they were admitted among the nobility as a recompense for service to the State during the war against the Genoese, which closed at Chioggia.

The families who had joined the conspiracy of

Tiepolo in 1310, suffered a degradation of their arms. The coat of the Querini, for instance, was changed from quarterly, or and gules, to per fesse, azure and gules, in the chief three stars or. Those cadets of the house who had not joined the conspiracy were allowed to blazon the fact that they had remained "buoni e fedeli" by bearing a B, argent, on the nombril point.

The last specimen of a Venetian knocker that I shall quote is at once the most beautiful and the most elaborate, and occurs more frequently than any other. In Gradenigo's book it is assigned to no less than eleven palaces, and it may still be seen *in situ* upon four of them: the Palazzo Pisani and the Palazzo Loredan at San Stefano, the Banca di Napoli at San Benedetto, and the Palazzo Clary on the Zattere. The author of this beautiful design is unknown; but it is quite certain from the number of times that it was reproduced that it acquired a great vogue in Venice. Here, as in the Longo knocker, a mythological subject is introduced: Neptune, brandishing his trident, stands upon two sea-horses, whose tails are thrown up behind him in rich foliation, while they paw the sea-water that is held in a conch at the base of the knocker. There are several variations of this design. Sometimes the horses' tails entwine and support a coat-of-arms; sometimes the tails are finished off in simple and massive flukes. The most famous of the palaces to which this famous knocker used to be attached

was the Palazzo Cornaro at San Polo. This house was made illustrious by the number of distinguished owners through whose hands it passed before it became the property of the Cornaro family. It was presented by the Government first, in the year 1348, to Giacomo Carrara, the friend and then the bitter foe of Venice. Forty years later this same palace formed part of the gift which rewarded Dal Verme for helping Venice to destroy the house of Carrara. Gattamelata of Narni, general of the Republic, and Francesco Sforza were subsequent owners, and the latter exchanged it for a house on the Grand Canal with Marco Cornaro, father of Caterina, Queen of Cyprus. It was from the palace at San Polo that Caterina went in procession to her fatal spousals in St. Mark's. The last male of the Cornaro family, Giovanni, died in 1798. It was he who carried out the bizarre idea of opening two doors on the Campo San Polo, in order that the dead and the living might never pass through the same portal.



A GREAT FAMILY THE GIUSTINIANI

THE Giustiniani are one of the few noble Venetian houses which still survive. They belong to the twenty-four original families who ruled as tribunes over the Venetian islands, and can prove a progenitor in the middle of the eighth century. But, not content with this respectable antiquity, they have sought a mythic pedigree and trace their descent through eleven emperors of Constantinople back to Justinian, from whom they claim their name, and, further still, to the founders of Athens. This is certainly ancient enough, and surpasses the descent of the Gordons, who are said to have come "from Greece to Gaul and thence into Scotland," or the pedigree of a famous Sir James Stewart of Kirkfield (*temp.* 1600), who claimed to be "fifty-fourth in descent from Fergus I. of Scotland, contemporary of Alexander the Great and Darius the Mede." To have gone much further back would have been dangerous, for it would have brought these noble families within a measurable distance of Adam.

The consecutive history of the Giustiniani begins

in the year 1170, and begins with a story which at once gives them a distinction, for it has not fallen to the lot of many noble houses to possess the blood of a Beato in their veins. The Venetians were at war with the Emperor Manuel I., and the whole family of Giustiniani followed their Doge to the Levant except one lad Nicolò, who was a monk in a monastery on the Lido. The Venetians took the island of Chios ; but while wintering there a fierce plague broke out among the fleet, so that the Doge returned to Venice the following year with only sixteen ships out of a hundred and twenty. In this expedition the whole stock of the Giustiniani had been killed either by plague or in battle, and the family seemed doomed to extinction. But the loss of such a vigorous race was deemed a public calamity ; the Government therefore petitioned the Pope to release Nicolò from his vows and to allow him to marry. The Pope assented. Nicolò was formally made a layman once more, and married the Doge's daughter. They had a family of nine sons and three daughters. After thus re-establishing his house upon this solid basis, Nicolò retired again to his cloister, where he won such a reputation for holiness that after his death the Church bestowed on him the title of "Blessed Confessor." His wife founded a nunnery on one of the islands near Torcello, where she died. The people gave her the rank of her husband ; she was afterwards known as the "Blessed Ann."

The family thus strangely preserved continued to flourish, and to such good purpose that in the sixteenth century there were as many as fifty different branches of the Giustiniani, and two hundred nobles of Venice bore that name. They counted among their illustrious two more Beati and a Saint, Lorenzo, first Patriarch of Venice. Lorenzo lived in a palace of his family well known to most visitors to Venice, for it is now the Albergo Europa; and here the Company of "the hose," in the days of its greatest splendour, gave many celebrated entertainments. The Giustiniani were prominent members of this famous club, called "of the hose" from the tight-fitting breeches which the companions wore. The uniform of a certain Francesco Giustiniani is recorded by the chroniclers; he wore hose of which the left leg was crimson and the right divided lengthwise in azure and violet, and embroidered with a cypress bough. The family owned many other palaces in various quarters of the city; but the three most notable are those which stand at the corner of the Grand Canal where it turns towards the Rialto. One of them now goes by the name of the Palazzo Foscari, because it was bought by that unfortunate Doge; but it was really built by members of the Giustiniani house. On the strength of their alleged descent from Theodora, sister of Justinian, the family placed their arms on the front of their palace thus: on an eagle displayed or, a shield—azure, a fesse or;

much as the Earls of Denbigh bear their arms, only the eagle of the Austrian Empire is black, while the Imperial bird of Constantinople is golden. The Council of Ten, however, called the family to order, and forbade any Venetian nobleman for the future to display either lilies or eagles.

Not the least remarkable point in the history of the Giustiniani is that which connects them with two noble English houses, Clifford and Radcliffe, and makes the Giustiniani-Bandini of Rome holders of the earldom of Newburgh. This branch of the family left Venice very early. They are descended from Piero, grandson of the Blessed Nicolò, the saviour of his house. Piero was lord of Chios, but his family were driven out by the Turks, and sought refuge in Rome. The earldom of Newburgh passed by a succession of heiresses into the family of Charles, titular Earl of Derwentwater, and brother to James, the ill-starred earl who lost his head in 1716 on Tower Hill—where Charles also shared the same fate in 1746—through the families of Clifford of Chudleigh and Mahony into that of Giustiniani-Bandini, where it now rests.

The family had its share of soldiers, men of letters, and doubtful characters; all of them noted with equal impartiality in the family tree. They broke into convents, brawled, stabbed, fought, and wrote; they served their country in many capacities, but only one of them reached the highest dignity in

the State. Marcantonio was Doge in the year 1687, when Morosini took the Morea—the last achievement of Venetian arms—and when a Venetian bomb destroyed the Parthenon. There is a curious and rare medal of this Doge, struck to commemorate the alliance of the Emperor, the King of Poland, and the Venetians against the Turk. On the obverse stand the three contracting parties holding a chain in a circle between them. On the reverse the eagle of Poland is picking out the eyes of a hound while the lion of St. Mark tears its forequarters; the Imperial eagle flutters its wings over the whole. The meaning is explained by this legend:—

“Durch diesem Bund
Der Turcken Hund
Mus gehn zu grund.”

The seventeenth century proved disastrous to the Giustiniani; and out of the fifty branches of this noble house only four remain. They were characteristically represented in the last act of the Republic by a hero and a traitor. Angelo Giustiniani withstood Napoleon to his face at Treviso, and armed the citizens against him, while his kinsman Leonardo was urging the Senate to surrender to the conqueror and to abolish that aristocratic Government of which his own family had been such famous members.

The Giustinian Recanati branch live in a large house on the Zattere. The palace is a museum of

interesting objects, collected and jealously preserved for generations. Perhaps their most curious treasure is the dagger which wounded Fra Paolo Sarpi at the height of the quarrel between Pope Paul V. and the



THE DAGGER THAT STABBED FRA PAOLO SARPI

Republic. Sarpi was set upon and stabbed late one evening on the bridge at Santa Fosca, near his monastery of the Servites. He was carried fainting into his cell, and when he came to he asked to see the dagger which Ridolfo Poma, his assailant, had left buried in the cheekbone; on their handing to

him the poniard, he drily remarked, “Agnosco stylum curiæ Romanæ.” The dagger, which was at first believed to be poisoned, was hung up by Fra Paolo as an *ex voto* in his conventual church; on the destruction of that building by Napoleon’s orders, the relic passed to its present owners.

VENETIAN PROVERBS

VENICE has not fallen behind other provinces of Italy in the publication of her proverbs. The great collections of Pitré, *Proverbi Siciliani*, the Tuscan collections of Giusti, Capponi, and Gotti, the Lombard proverbs by Samarani, the Genoese by Staglieno, are well known. Angelo Dalmedico (1867) and Signor Cristoforo Pasqualigo (1882) have rendered a like service to the proverbs of the Veneto. Pasqualigo's collection embraces both the lagoon, the plain, and the hills. In it you find the local saws of Venice herself, of the Marca Trevigiana, the Padovano, Vicentino, Veronese, the hills of Brescia, and the Carniatic and Julian Alps, embracing the high-lying communes above Bassano and Schio. His work is thoroughly done, and preserves for us the pith of popular thought, feeling, wit, condensed in that common coin of language the proverb.

The value of such collections for the student of dialects is obvious, for there you find all the minute variations of idiom which characterise the many divisions of the Veneto. But it is not to this highly specialised branch of philology that we would draw attention here. We would rather note, as far as

possible, the character, temper, wit of the Venetian people as displayed in the condensed form of saws and adages, the literature of the street and of the field. The majority of these proverbs are, of course, common in intention to all mankind. If a proverb is "the offspring of time and experience," and owes its currency to its veracity, the larger number of proverbs will be found broadcast over the world. Variation must be sought in the terseness, pungency, polish of the form. This applies to proverbs which bear on human life and conduct as a whole. But as we shall presently see, there is a section which depends upon local conditions for its meaning and its value, the proverbs which refer to history, agriculture, and neighbouring states.

A city such as Venice, the commercial centre of medieval and renaissance Europe, a people like the Venetians, hardy sailors, bold adventurers, busy merchants, were certain to accumulate early in their history a fund of saws and apophthegms, condensing their experience and reducing their observations to a handy and current form. And, in fact, Venice does offer us one of the earliest collections of European proverbs in the famous *Dieci Tavole*—ten broad sheets containing each about one hundred and fifty sayings, mostly Venetian, though interspersed with a few Greek, Tuscan, Lombard, Neapolitan, French, and Spanish saws. They were printed certainly later than 1509, for the League

of Cambray is recorded, and were reprinted in volume form in Rome and Turin in 1535. The Turin reprint has this title-page: "Incomenciano le Diece Tavole di Prover | bii, Sententie, Detti, et modi di parlare | che hoggi di da tutthuomo nel co | mun parlare d' Italia si usano. | Molti utili e necessa | rii a tutti quelli gentili spiri | ti che di copiosa et ornatamente ra | gionare procacciano. tradute et rista | pate in questa piccola et bella forma." It closes thus: "Stampate in Turino per Martino Cravoto, et soi Compagni ala instantia de Jacobino Dolce, alias Cuni, nel anno MDXXXV a dì 30 de Avosto." The preface sets forth the reason for reprinting the broadsides, namely the inconvenience of carrying them about in that form. Both the title-page and the preface insist on the importance and value of these common forms of speech for all gentle spirits who desire to discourse both fully and politely. Proverbs were clearly considered part of a traveller's equipment. We are reminded of Charles Merbury's *Collection of Italian Proverbs, in benefit of such as are studious of that language*, printed in London in 1581; and this brings us to the real root of the proverb.

Any one who is familiar with Venice must be struck when reading Pasqualigo's collection of seven thousand five hundred saws, by the number of times he has heard so many of them on the lips of the people. They are constantly passing from mouth to mouth every hour of the day. Hardly an event can

take place in the domestic circle but its bearings, causes, effects are summed up in a proverb. The reasons for this are plain. In the first place, an adage saves a lot of trouble; it must contain a certain amount of truth or it would not have floated, "el proverbio no fala"—a proverb is never out. Then it is short and easy to remember; then the commentary that it contains is probably better, more to the point, than anything the speaker could supply on the spur of the moment; then it has a certain nip in it which raises the remark above the level of dulness; finally, the proverbs which are suitable to almost every occasion of life are so numerous that each actor or assistant is probably able to get out some kind of contribution and so to feel that he, at all events, has cut a figure. All these reasons combine to make proverbial conversation a characteristic of the primitive and uneducated.

As regards form, the majority of Venetian proverbs rhyme, some are merely alliterative, some again contain a play on words or a paradox; all four characteristics are intended to fix the saying in the memory and keep it there ready for use. For example, your servant will remark when an object is missing—

Quel che man non prende
Canton di casa rende.

(Never fash to hunt in vain,
What has not been stolen will turn up again.)

And it often does.

Un "si" in triga,
Un "no" disbriga.

"Yes" means a mess,
"No," free you go.

El segreto dele femene no lo sa nessun
Altro che mi e vu e tuto il comun.

(A woman's secret is known to none
Save me and you and all the town.)

Porte averte tende a le case.

(The open door guards the house.)

At least Venetian servants think so, and they add—

Chi vuol ladri in casa serè su.

(Everything under lock and key,
And thieves in your house you will presently see.)

An injunction not to be suspicious of domestics.

No ghe tristo can che no mena la coa.

(The worst dog will wag his tail.)

Dieta mazza 'l medico.

(Diet dishes the doctor.)

"Salvia salva" is an aphorism from the early medical school at Salerno, "cur moriatur homo cui salvia crescit in horto." "El tenero rompe el duro," a form of "gutta cavat lapidem," with an implication that the suave manner wins in the end.

"Se," "ma," "forse," "pol esser," "chi sa,"

I xe cinque cogion d' Adamo in qua.

("If," "but," "perhaps," "may be," "who knows,"
Five pretty fools as this world goes.)

“Siamo su 'n ponte,” meaning “we’re beggared,” refers to the mendicants—“aliquis de ponte”—as Juvenal says, who haunt the bridge steps where the passenger has to slacken his pace, and is thus made easier prey to importunity.

The proverbs of medicine and hygiene are both numerous and curious. Here is a prescription for health, “Zocoli, brocoli capelo e poco cervelo,” which means “sandal-shod, vegetable diet, well-covered head and nothing to worry it.” The common saw that “gnente xe bon per i oci” (“nothing is good for the eyes”) is not a statement of despair, but a misreading of the old prescription, “Nickel album” as “nihil,” not “nickel,” but “nothing.”

Many Venetian proverbs are, of course, common to the rest of Italy, with nothing peculiarly Venetian about them but their language. “Chi no pol sempre vol” and its converse “Chi pol non vol” (“Who can’t doth always want,” and “Who can never will”) finds expression in the opening lines of Michel Angelo’s sonnet to Pope Julius II.:—

“Signore, se vero è alcun proverbio antico
Questo è ben quel che Chi può mai non vuole.”

One of the sayings of the Ten Tables, “Venetia, Venetia, chi non ti vede non ti pretia,” has found its way just as it stands into *Love’s Labour’s Lost*; while “Fast bind fast find a proverb never stale in thrifty mind,” seems to be the *Merchant of Venice’s*

rendering of "Chi ben liga ben disliga." Some proverbs again are reminiscent of older Latin formulas; for example, "Baco, tabaco e Venere, Riduse l'omo in cenere" is clearly adapted from "Balnea, vina, Venus, mortalia corpora frangunt, sed vitam faciunt, balnea, vina, Venus"; while "A una bona mugier ghe vol quatro b. Bona, brava, bella, bezzi" is a reflex of this: "Quam si ducturus teneat P. quinque puella sit pia, sit prudens, pulcra, pudica, potens"; and "Chi impresta perde dopio" is a poor condensation of "si prestatis non habebis; si habetis non tam cito; si tam cito non tam bonus; si tam bonus perdes amicum."

Connected with Italian cards and card-playing are certain gnomic phrases consecrated by immemorial usage. Three of the Italian aces, cups, swords, and clubs, have mottoes inscribed upon them. Swords bears—

Non ti fidar di me s' el cuor ti manca.

Clubs has—

Se ti perdi tuo danno.

Cups has a mysterious motto—

Per un punto Martin perse la cappa,

which has reference to a certain Abbot Martin, who lost his abbey for a slip in punctuation. Over the door he wrote, "Porta patens esto nulli, claudetur honesto," which so enraged a travelling Pontiff that he deprived the offender.

Besides these mottoes on the aces, there are certain phrases connected with the various suits. These are uttered in the course of the game, as the spirit moves them, by one or by all of the players. For example, a player will play denari, and will say, quite *sotto voce*—

Denari, chi non ha amor non prende.

(The man without income
Love treats like a nincom.)

Or again, he will only get as far as “denari,” when all the players will add, in dreamy voices, “chi ga spesi e chi ga ciari”—

This is tin ;
Some have it thick and some have it thin.

Or “spade, chi sta in piede non cadde”—

This is a brand ;
You will not fall if you manage to stand.

No one takes any notice of these remarks ; the game goes on all the same, and no one is obliged to utter the mystic phrases ; but, murmured in dreamy, far-off voices by all the players, they give a strange feeling of mystery and incantation to a game of briscola or tresette in an Italian osteria.

Some of the observations in physics embedded in these proverbs are interesting. “Palo fa paluo” is profoundly true of the lagoons, where the driving of piles retards the scour of the water and soon leads to silting up. “El peso no dorme mai” (“The weight never sleeps”) has a double reference to the weight

on the mind and the weight in the construction ; in its later signification it recalls our own architects' saying, "the arch never sleeps." "Muro d' inverno, muro eterno," "The winter wall will outlast all," because it is built more slowly, days are shorter, and the mortar will not dry too quickly. The Ten Tables give this observation as to the natural movement of moisture. "In thirty years and months in rain, water finds its way home again." The mud-banks of the lagoon give warning, "Ti me fa ti e mi te defazo ti," "If you make me I'll unmake you" by sending malaria. Galileo quotes the proverb about the tides, "Sette, otto, nove, l' aqua no se move ; Venti, ventun e ventidò l' aqua no va nè su nè zo," as a correct observation of the neaps.

If there is any quality which we may ascribe as peculiarly characteristic of Venetian proverbs, it is, perhaps, the imaginative faculty, which enables the people to identify themselves with some natural object or some process of nature, and to speak through it. As we have seen, it is the lagoon that warns the city not to let the marsh lands encroach ; but it is on the mainland and in the field of agriculture that this quality comes out in all its liveliness of fancy. The vine says, "Piànteme sul sasso il tième grasso" ("Plant me on rock with dung about my stock") ; "Làsseme el me fojame e te lasso to luàme" ("Leave my leaves to me, I'll leave thy dung to thee"). And at pruning time, "Make me poor, I'll

make thee rich" ("Fàme me povera e te farò rico"); "Nèteme ben dai piè e trame come te sè" ("Keep me clean about the roots, and for the rest do what thee suits"). The maize says, "Tième largo se te vol che te cargo" ("Wide apart let me be sown if I'm to make your granary groan"). The field prays that its stubble may be left to it: "Don't rob what you cannot give" ("No torme quel che no te pol darne"). The roof says to the landlord, "Se no te vien suso ti vegno zo mi" ("If you won't come up to me, why I'll come down to thee"). These proverbs of the farm life contain a whole world of rural wisdom as to tilling, sowing, reaping, hedging, ditching. "Beato quel campeto che ga sièsa col fosseto" ("That field is rich that hath hedge and ditch").

Of proverbs that owe their meaning to purely local circumstances some refer to life in Venice; for example, as to the relative healthiness of the various floors of a house they say, "El primo a nissun, el secondo al nemigo el terzo a l' amico e 'l quarto per ti" ("Ground floor for none, first floor for foe, second for friend, third for yourself"). Others, again, refer to some definite historical event. "El bianco e negro ha fatto rica Venezia" means the trade in cotton and pepper; and it was only a seafaring people who could have said, and said so truly, "El mar xè 'l fachin de la terra" ("The sea plays porter to the land"), and this, "Chi xè paron del mar xè paron de la terra" ("Who is master of the sea is master of the land"),

which between them sum up the doctrine of sea-power, as stated by Fra Paolo Sarpi, "Chi può venire per mare non è mai lontano," by Sir Walter Raleigh, "Whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself," and by Captain Mahan. It is not easy to fix the date of the following, though it most likely belongs to the flourishing period of the Republic, in spite of the reference to the French cook: "Todeschi a la stala, Francesi in cusina, Spagnoli a la camera, Italiani a ogni cosa" ("A German groom in the stable, a French cook if you're able, a Spaniard to wait at table, an Italian for everything imaginable"). Venetian market days are recorded thus: "Luni luniol; Marti, a San Griguol; Mercore, a San Polo; Zobia, a Castello; Venere, a Santa Croce; Sabado, in Piazza San Marco; Domenica, festa." "Piera bianca, culo nero" is more modern, and refers to the slippery white marble edges to the steps on the innumerable bridges of the city. "Pantalon paga per tutti" refers to the long wars which the Republic waged against the Turk in the defence of Europe at her sole charges and unassisted by Europe. "Esser in Candia" means to have not a *sous* in your pocket, the state of the Venetian Treasury at the end of the long war in Crete, while "Prima Veneziani e poi Cristiani" has its origin in the quarrel between Paul V. and the Republic at the

time of Paolo Sarpi. The oldest historical reference to be found in current Venetian phrases is probably "È un Atila," meaning a remorseless, cruel man. It will be remembered that Napoleon, when he had made up his mind to end the Republic, declared to its envoy, "Sarò un Atila per la Republica." The three governments of which Venice had experience before the Union of Italy are thus summed up: "Co Venezia comandava se disnava, se cenava; Co Francesi, bona zente, se disnava solamente; Co la Casa di Lorena ne se disna ne se cena" ("While the Lion of St. Marco ruled one could both dine and sup; under the French, good folk, one only dined; under the House of Lorraine we go without dinner and supper"). The obscure proverb, "Padova impica l' aseno" ("Padua hangs the donkey"), springs from the legend that the people of Padua wishing to string up the famous necromancer, Pietro d' Abano, found that owing to his spells they had hung an ass instead.

But Venetian proverbs are not exhausted even by Signor Pasqualigo's industry. The popular spirit loves a saw as dearly as it ever did. The fount is perennial, and current events of a striking character give rise to pithy sayings, some of which may catch on and live, most of which die, just as in the case of slang, to which the proverb is, indeed, a kind of cousin. While the Boer War was raging I heard two men quarrelling in the street, one, it seemed, had made the

other call again and again for a credit. "Per amor di Dio," said the creditor, "non mi fa passre la Tugela." There is still at SS. Apostoli a Calle dei Proverbi where, until recently, was a house bearing on its front these two proverbs wrought in stone: "Dì de ti e poi di me dirai," "Speak first of yourself then you may speak of me"; and "Chi semena spine non vadi descalzo," "Who scatters thorns had best not walk unshod," with which piece of advice we may compare the Scottish caution carved over a door in Dunfermline—

"Sith word is thrall and thought is free,
Keep well thy tongue, I counsel thee."

It is impossible to agree with Signor Pasqualigo that there are no new proverbs, nor yet with the proverb itself, "Per far un proverbio ghe vol cent' ani." Every proverb must have been new once. The sole test of a proverb is that it should float, that it should pass into currency, and for that, perhaps, a hundred years is not too long a probation; but the proverb-making spirit is as active as ever among the Venetian people.

THE ROOTS OF VENICE PILES AND PILE-DRIVING

IT is characteristic of conservative Venice that, although the whole city is built on piles, though piles are required to mark the channels all over the lagoon, though piles stand before the doors of most houses on the grand or small canals, though pile-driving is continually going on in some corner of the city or in some tract of the lagoon, still, in the year 1904, there is only one steam pile-driver to be had, and that is a new-comer. The incessant work of driving piles is still carried on by the primitive method of weight and pulley worked by hand. This state of things will not last. Venice is rapidly changing; waking from a long torpor she clamours for modern methods, modern machinery, "progress." The art of the pile-driver will soon disappear, and with it the picturesque chaunts that accompany the toil.

The piles of Venice are, for the most part, made of oak from the forests of Chirignago, near Mestre, and those that follow the course of the Dezse, between Mestre and San Donà di Piave. Elm is also

employed, and even larch under some of the older buildings, while, where the work has been scamped, you may find such soft woods as deal and even white poplar, as is the case with some of the piles of the Campanile. All timber seems to do provided the pile is completely buried. Preserved from the action of air and water, the wood becomes black and hard. During the course of alterations at Sant'Eufemia on the Giudecca, I saw larch piles, that cannot have been driven later than 1300, being drawn from their clay bed. They looked like carbonised logs, but retained their fibre and resisting power.

Two fates await the pile. It may be intended for foundation purposes, in which case it is completely buried, driven, as the pile-driver chaunts, "down to the tremendous caverns of the sea," where it will silently, for centuries, bear the weight of church, and palace, and campanile; will groan as the high wind sways the bell-tower, and feel the tremor of earthquakes that run across the lagoon from the volcanic focus of the Euganean Hills or the still more distant Monte Baldo; or, on the other hand, the pile may be meant to mark the course of channels in the lagoon, or to serve and adorn, with its bright heraldic colours, the façade of some palace on the Grand Canal. If such be its destiny, then, in about fifteen years' time, the teredo will have eaten it away at the brief span between wind and water, where the alternate rise and fall of the tide give life to the corrosive

insect, while the black-headed, asparagus-like groups of the lagoon piles will have suffered a further damage by the fisher-folk, who find then handy fire-wood for cooking their polenta or their coffee in the crude winter months.

The bed into which the piles are driven is not, as might be supposed, a layer of soft mud. It is, on the contrary, a stratum of remarkably hard clay; the labour and difficulty of forcing the pile down is often recalled in the pile-driver's chaunts; indeed, so much pressure is required that in many cases the fibre of the pile is twisted into a spiral, which toughens the wood and helps it to resist the corrosive action of the elements. This clay bed or cushion upon which Venice rests is streaked with layers of peat, the early deposit of rivers that once discharged into the lagoon. The consistency of the clay varies at different points of the city. In the quarter of Dorsoduro, or "hard back," it is, as the name implies, very firm. At the Frari, on the other hand, it is softer and saturated with water, supposed to be filtrations from the *rivo alto*, or deep stream, that gave its name to the earliest islands of the city, and the famous Rialto bridge. This clay cushion is said to be from twenty to twenty-five feet thick, and it in its turn rests upon a bed of shifting, watery sand whose depth has not been probed, though it may, perhaps, be approximately measured if we take the angle of incidence presented by the southern Alpine

slope and the distance between Venice and the present foot of the Alps. For it is probable that the Alpine declivity is continued far beyond and below the present plain, and what lies immediately beneath Venice is first the roots of the Alps themselves, then a stratum of boulders and débris such as we find cropping out near the actual foot of the mountains, then a deep layer of watery sand, upon which rests the clay cushion that carries Venice. And so the city is borne on a more or less elastic subsoil, and the resistance to the pressure of the buildings is a hydraulic resistance obtained from the watery quicksand below the clay. The heavier the weight the stronger the counter up-thrust. But it is essential that the clay cushion shall never be pierced by the piles, otherwise a perfect geyser of sand and water is at once thrown up, as happened once at Sant 'Agnese, and the pile loses all its carrying power.

When the ornamental or signal piles, the half-submerged piles, have to be drawn in order to make room for a new one, a large barge with a powerful winch is brought up at low tide, and the lower part of the pile is tightly bound round with chains which are made fast to the barge. As the tide rises the barge is lifted, and slowly, with jerks and curious rending noises, the pile is loosened from its bed. Then the winch is brought into play, and the pile is finally extracted. When a pile is to be driven, a



PILE-DRIVING

barge with two upright barks of timber at her side is brought to the place. Attached to these barks are the weight, the pulley, and the main rope. To the main rope are spliced as many smaller ropes as there are hands for the operation. The main rope is sometimes replaced by a chain and a ring, to which the smaller haul-ropes are fastened. The defect of the hand-driving system is that the weight can never be raised higher than the down-pull of a single man, therefore the force of the blow remains the same from the beginning to the end of the operation, but the resistance of the pile increases as it is driven further and further into the clay; the process is accordingly a very slow one; whereas with a machine driver, that raises the weight each time to its maximum height, the force of the blow increases steadily as the pile is driven further and further in, leaving a greater height for the fall. The head of the pile is firmly bound round with cord, or hooped with iron, to prevent it from splitting, and then it is fitted into its place between the upright barks. Each man seizes one of the smaller ropes, and the foreman begins the chaunt, without which no pile is driven in Venice. Every line ends alternately in a prolonged "e" or "o." As the "e" or "o" is finished each man hauls at his rope; the weight is raised and let go, descending with a thud that is borne in muffled reverberations over the surface of the lagoon.

Picturesque groups do they form, these men with shirts of pale rose, or faded blue or grey, in the luminous atmosphere of lagoon, sky, and water. To work the easier they get down to their shirts and their drawers, and the whole scheme of movement and of colour will often recall some aerial phantasy of Tiepolo's delicate designing.

I have tried to save and record here some of their strange songs—childish, historical, rarely obscene—just as I got them, dictated by one pile-driver and written down by his brother, with all their quaint orthography, and there is added a rough rendering of what was presentable. Some of these chaunts are, no doubt, made upon the spur of the moment by a clever improvisatore; but many of them are old, traditionally passed from mouth to mouth among the pile-drivers. Through their apparent childishness one catches references to great historical events. The frequent mention of the Turk would take us back at least to the War of Candia, 1650, if not to the Battle of Lepanto, 1571: the announcement of victory points to the earlier date. Rome and the Turk, and monks and nuns play a large part, and there is one grim reference to the punishment of peccant sisters in the dread formula of "Go in peace." The third of the chaunts here given is a sort of *rund-reise* of the lagoons. We are taken to Fusina, Malamocco, the Giudecca, Lido, and the *orto de ibrei*,—"the garden of the Jews,"—as the Israelite burying-place is

picturesquely styled, the two castles, San Nicolo and Sammichele's great fort of Sant' Andrea that guard the Lido entrance, Murano, Burano, and Malghera. But the most striking passage is that in which the chaunt rises to a storm of oburgation addressed to the pile that won't go home.

The long monotonous chorus, each verse punctuated by the thud of the driver, must be familiar to all who love the lagoon of Venice. They may not be sorry to have some of the words which, in all probability, another generation will never hear.

I

Oh ! issa, e . e . . e !	Up with it well,
Iseo in alto, o . o . . o !	Up to the top.
In alto ben, e . e . . e !	Up with it well,
Fin al capelo, o . o . . o !	Up to the summit.
E Sant' Isepo, e . e . . e !	Saint Joseph, he
E veciarelo, o . o . . o !	Was an old fellow,
Che cho l' assa, e . e . . e !	With his adze he,
Piana e martelo, o . o . . o !	Plane and hammer he,
Per fabricare, e . e . . e !	Went for to make
Un gran vascelo, o . o . . o !	A great ship,
Per contrastare, e . e . . e !	All for to fight
El gran Sultano, o . o . . o !	The great Sultano,
El gran Sultano, e . e . . e !	The great Sultano,
Xe re dei turchi, o . o . . o !	Him of the Turks,
E turchi moni, e . e . . e !	Those fools of Turks,
Per imposesarse, o . o . . o !	All for to get
Dei suoi tesori, e . e . . e !	Hold of his treasure,
Per imposesarse, o . o . . o !	All for to seize
La so baldanza, e . e . . e !	All he had pride in,
Napuli belo, o . o . . o !	Naples the fair,
E Roma Santa, e . e . . e !	And Rome the holy.
E drento in Roma, o . o . . o !	Inside Rome
La messa i canta, e . e . . e !	They sing the Masses.

E drento in Roma, o . o . . o !
 Ghe se el pardon, e . e . . e !
 E anca i frati, o . o . . o !
 De San Bruson, e . e . . e !
 E cole muneghe, o . o . . o !
 De Malamoco, e . e . . e !
 Che le gha el pelo, o . o . . o !
 Su l' articioco, e . e . . e !
 E le se onse, o . o . . o !
 Cola mantecha, e . e . . e !
 Parchè i mosati, o . o . . o !
 No ghelo becha, e . e . . e !
 E così parla, o . o . . o !
 La scrittura, e . e . . e !
 Andando in pase, o . o . . o !
 Mazor sventura, e . e . . e !
 Senti che bote, o . o . . o !
 Come le canta, e . e . . e !
 Canta da galo, o . o . . o !
 E da galina, e . e . . e !
 La galineta, o . o . . o !
 Ga fatto el vovo, e . e . . e !
 La lo ga fato, o . o . . o !
 In sula pagia, e . e . . e !
 Ma cosa galo, o . o . . o !
 Sto maledeto, e . e . . e !
 Digo del palo, o . o . . o !
 Ma nol xe un palo, e . e . . e !
 Xe una colona, o . o . . o !
 La qual sostiene, e . e . . e !
 I fondamenti, o . o . . o !
 De sto lavoro, e . e . . e !
 E cossa galo, o . o . . o !
 Che el bate duro, e . e . . e !
 El bate duro, o . o . . o !
 E po lasèlo, e . e . . e !
 Lasèlo andare, o . o . . o !
 A baso a fondi, e . e . . e !
 A fondi del mare, o . o . . o !

Inside Rome
 There is the Master.
 Also the friars
 Of San Bruson,
 And eke the nuns,
 Nuns of Malamocco,
 Nuns with the fine skin
 Over the artichoke.
 Yes, and they grease them
 Well with fine butter,
 So that the gadflies
 Never can sting them.
 Thus in sooth speaks
 Our Holy Scripture.
 And when they "go in peace"
 Worse luck befalls them.
 Hark to the deep stroke,
 Hark how it rings out
 Song of the crowing cock,
 Song of the hen, too.
 Song of the clacking hen
 Just that has laid an egg.
 Yes, she has laid it
 Right on the straw there.
 Now, what is up with it,
 This cursed thing here?
 I mean this pile here.
 No, no pile it is,
 No, it's ■ column
 Made for to keep up
 All the foundations
 Of this here building.
 But what is up with it
 That it's so stubborn;
 Aye, is it stubborn.
 Yet let it go now,
 Aye, let it go now
 Down to the deep depths,
 Depths of the ocean;

<p> E va a ritrovare, e . e . . e ! I suoi compagni, o . o . . o ! Dele caverne, e . e . . e ! Orende scure, o . o . . o ! Dele caverne, e . e . . e ! Orende grote, o . o . . o ! Ste quatro bote, e . e . . e ! Deghele care, o . o . . o ! Deghele forte, e . e . . e ! Che la se senta, o . o . . o ! Fino ale porte, e . e . . e ! De l' arsenale, o . o . . o ! Dove vien fora, e . e . . e ! Vasei e nave, o . o . . o ! Dove vien fora, e . e . . e ! Briche e golete, o . o . . o ! E xe direte, e . e . . e ! D' aver da andare, o . o . . o ! A contrastare, e . e . . e ! Contro el gran turcho, o . o . . o ! Contro el gran turcho, e . e . . e ! Che l' è nemico, o . o . . o ! E po diremo, e . e . . e ! Amico sei vinto, o . o . . o ! E vinto abiamo, e . e . . e ! E poi spieghiamo, o . o . . o ! Bandiera bianca, e . e . . e ! Segno di pace, o . o . . o ! E poi spieghiamo, e . e . . e ! Bandiera rossa, o . o . . o ! Segno di sangue, e . e . . e ! E poi spieghiamo, o . o . . o ! Bandiera nera, e . e . . e ! Segno de morte, o . o . . o ! E segura, e . e . . e ! E cusi sia, o . o . . o ! Santa Maria, e . e . . e ! La xe finia, o . o . . o ! E sia, e . e . . e ! </p>	<p> Down till it finds there All its companions ; Down in the caverns Awful and gloomy ; Down in the caverns Grots full of horror. Drive we amain then, Give it her hot then, Give it her strong then, Aye, let them feel it Up to the very gates, Gates of the arsenal, Whence there will come forth Vessels and ships too, Whence there will come forth Brigs and our schooners, Bound, as we all know, Bound for the battle, Bound for to battle E'en with the great Turk, Aye, with the great Turk, Who is our enemy. Then will we cry aloud, Friend, you are done for, Victors indeed are we ; Then let us fly the flag, Flag that is all white, Flag that means peace at last. Then let us fly the flag, Flag that is deep red, Flag that means blood so red. Then let us fly the flag, Flag that is all black, Flag that means death. For very sure is death, And so be it then. Santa Maria, Here is the end on it. Amen. </p>
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II

Oh isa, e . . . e!
 E che da isa, o . . . o!
 Vien le sardele, e . . . e!
 Ancha a Venezia, o . . . o!
 Gran done bele, e . . . e!
 E che le scorla, o . . . o!
 Le scarsele, e . . . e!
 A sti povari, o . . . o!
 Lavoranti, e . . . e!
 Che dal mondo, o . . . o!
 Noi siamo tanti, e . . . e!
 E che dal mando, o . . . o!
 Noi siamo scriti, e . . . e!
 Prima i grandi, o . . . o!
 E dopo i piccoli, e . . . e!
 E cusi sia, o . . . o!
 La xe finia, e . . . e!

Up with it, oh!
 Up let it go.
 Here come the sardines!
 Yes, and in Venice
 Lots of fine women
 Who know how to jingle
 Jingle the pockets
 Of us poor fellows,
 Hard-working fellows.
 Here in the world
 We are too many;
 Here in the world
 Writ is it for us;
 First come the great ones,
 Last come the little.
 So be it then,
 Here is an end on it.

III

Questi xe i remi, o . . . o!
 De serti barcharoli, e . . . e!
 Che andando a charagoli, o . . . o!
 I xe restai in seco, e . . . e!
 Questo xe barachecho, o . . . o!
 Che xe chasca in canale, e . . . e!
 Per no saver nuar, o . . . o!
 El sta negao, e . . . e!
 Lo gho ricuparao, o . . . o!
 Lo gho meso qua drento, e . . . e!
 Per darghe spasso al tempo, o . . . o!
 Al Carnovale, e . . . e!
 Nol gha voludo stare, o . . . o!
 El gha voludo'n andare via, e . . . e!
 E sel se perderà, o . . . o!
 Sarà so dano, e . . . e!
 Rivederse un altro ano, o . . . o!
 Come questo, e . . . e!
 E po ve dirò resto, o . . . o!
 E vado in paxe, e . . . e!

These are the oars
 Of certain boatmen
 Who, fishing winkles,
 Stuck in the mud.
 This is Uncle Jimmy
 Who fell in the water.
 As he could not swim,
 Why, he was drowned,
 But that I saved him
 And put him in here
 All for to please him
 During the Carnival.
 He wouldn't stay—not he.
 He would be off—would he!
 And if he comes to grief,
 Why, it's his own fault.
 Here's to another year
 Much like this one,
 And then I'll end my tale
 And go in peace.

Mi gho dele fughase, o . o . . o!
 De quele da Malghera, e . e . . e!
 Gho caminà par tera, o . o . . o!
 Fin a Fusina, e . e . . e!
 E da trasto in sentina, o . o . . o!
 A un sandolin da sciopo, e . e . . e!
 Che andando de galopo, o . o . . o!
 Fino ala Zueca, e . e . . e!
 Gho visto tutta la seca, o . o . . o!
 E tutta la pescaria, e . e . . e!
 Me ne so andato via, o . o . . o!
 Per el sìroco, e . e . . e!
 Go visto Malamoco, o . o . . o!
 E tutto lio, e . e . . e!
 Go da la pope indrio, o . o . . o!
 Ai do casteli, e . e . . e!
 Go visto l'orto di ibrei, o . o . . o!
 Con tutte le vignole, e . e . . e!
 Dale vignole po, o . o . . o!
 Me son ridoto, e . e . . e!
 Go caminà par tutto, o . o . . o!
 Go visto un buranello, e . e . . e!
 El gaveva un bel sestelo, o . o . . o!
 El me l' a mostrato, e . e . . e!
 E po me ne son andato, o . o . . o!
 Dove che i fava i goti, e . e . . e!
 Sonando la spineta, o . o . . o!
 A sti merloti, e . e . . e!
 E poi me ne son andato, o . o . . o!
 Dove che i fa i bosoni, e . e . . e!
 A sonarghe la spineta, o . o . . o!
 A sti mincioni, e . e . . e!
 E cusi sia la xe finia, o . o . . o!

I've got a bun here
 Made at Malghera.
 And on the land I've trod
 Far as Fusina,
 From thwart to taffrail
 Of a fine ducking boat.
 Rowing with all my might
 Up to Giudecca,
 There did I see the mint,
 Also the fish market,
 And then was off again;
 Off to the south-east.
 There's Malamocco
 And all the Lido.
 Then right about went I
 To the twin castles.
 Next came the Jews' close;
 Then all the vineyards.
 Then from the vineyards
 Back came I once again.
 Everywhere have I been.
 One from Buranó I met,
 Basket of fish had he,
 Which he would show me.
 But off he went again
 And I betook me
 To where they tumblers make,
 Playing my zither
 All for their silly sake.
 Then I betook me
 To where the jugs are made
 To play my zither
 All for their silly sake.
 So be it then—
 Here is an end on it.

VENICE EN FÊTE

FEW cities are better adapted for a spectacular *fête* than Venice is. The wide spaces of the lagoon offer a splendid field for pageantry; the curve of the Riva and the campanili of the city form a beautiful and varied background; the windings of the Grand Canal and the endless diversity of its palace fronts lend themselves to decoration of carpets, flags, and tapestry; while the piazza is unrivalled in Europe. The Republic, in the days of her meridian splendour, knew her capabilities in this aspect; and entertained, with lavish magnificence, the sovereigns and princes who passed her way. The time is long gone by for these great masques, nor has Venice the wealth to spend upon them. Yet even now, when the city lays herself out to honour some public event, or royal guest, the inherent excellence of her position makes itself felt and seen at once. And perhaps the point which most decidedly, yet most unobtrusively, distinguishes a Venetian *fête*, and renders it so enjoyable, is this, that in Venice alone can one be in a crowd and not be crushed. Though the whole Grand Canal be packed with gondolas, wedged as tightly as bottles

in a bin, yet the space in the gondola is ample, and as much one's own as if the boat were out and away upon the solitary lagoon.

I

The Geographical Congress was holding its sittings during September of 1882. The King and Queen and a host of European celebrities were assembled in Venice, and the city prepared a pageant to do them honour. This pageant was to consist of three parts: a regatta, a serenade, and an illumination.

The regatta was fixed for three o'clock; and the Grand Canal was a flutter of flags from one end to the other. The palace fronts were draped with ancient family tapestries, or rugs and carpets of rich oriental dyes; the balconies full of people watching the crowd of boats on the water below. Most of these were making towards the Palazzo Foscari, where the winning-post was placed and whence the royal party would see the finish.

The course of these great annual regattas has been the same ever since regattas were rowed in Venice. It runs from the stairs at the public gardens, by the Grand Canal, to the station and back again to the Palazzo Foscari. The race is rowed in gondolas much lighter and thinner than the ordinary, and manned by two rowers. The prizes are four in number; the first three consist of purses of money and flags—red, green, and blue—which the winners

plant on the prows of their gondolas; the fourth prize is a sucking pig and a yellow flag with a pig embroidered upon it. Some point near the Palazzo Foscari is the best from which to watch the regatta; though, as a matter of fact, the race is virtually over and the sporting interest dead before the rowers enter the Grand Canal; the struggle for the lead takes place at the very start, and those who win it usually keep it, unless some accident upset the order.

The principal charm of these regattas is the procession of boats that clear the course, the movement on the waters of the Grand Canal, and the splendid spectacle of the canal itself. In the first place there are the *bissone* and *peote*, large boats rowed by ten and twelve oars respectively. These boats are fitted out by the commercial houses of Venice, and they and their crews are dressed to illustrate some appropriate allegory. On this occasion the dressing of the boats had a geographical significance, and symbolised some quarter of the globe. One paid a tribute to the Arctic regions, and all its crew were costumed as polar bears; a walrus lay couched upon the bows, and behind, on the stern, was a pyramid of ice; while frosted silver fringes trailed upon the water by the gunwale. Another bore upon her bows a trophy of Venetian glass that dazzled in the sunlight; from the stern sprang a winged Fame, whose shoulders let fall a drapery of pale pink gauze that fluttered down and settled in ripples on the wake.

There were seven or eight of these great boats, each in a different livery—blue, pink, silver, crimson and gold, green, orange and brown, etc.—and, as they swept in procession up the Grand Canal under the clear blue sky, the shifting of lights, the combinations of colour, the magnetic enthusiasm of the crowd, produced a sensation such as the attack of an orchestra will sometimes stir, and quickened the nerves to involuntary tears.

Besides these boats there were others of similar build, manned by private parties of friends. These were not draped, but the liveries of the rowers were more carefully studied and of more costly material, with silk and velvet and lace. The crews made display of their skill, and amused the crowd by rowing at full speed up to the judges' barge, then suddenly stopping their boat within two inches of the winning post. The gondolas of the Venetian nobility gave further life and colour to the scene, flashing about among the crowd; each of them had four gondoliers in the family livery; many of whom wore slashed doublets, puffed hose, long silk stockings, and hats with a plume at the side, in the antique style.

As three o'clock drew on the King and Queen passed up to the Palazzo Foscari. The crowd pressed closer and closer; the gondolas settled down into a solid mass, as they always do, nuzzling their bows together. A hush of expectation fell upon the throng. The breeze blew faintly in from the lagoon,

and brought with it the boom of the signal gun ; and all the while the tide stole by, unheeding, silent, and persistent, down the Grand Canal, and wound its way towards the sea.

II

The serenade was timed for eight o'clock ; and the great barge that carried the singers and the music left the station end of the Grand Canal. The chief point of attraction in a serenade is the Rialto, where a halt takes place, and much of the singing is done. Long before eight o'clock the water was alive with gondolas making for the bridge ; and when the barge, with its pyramids of green and crimson lamps, came slowly round the further bend, like a moving wall of coloured fire, it found the whole waterway up to the Rialto paved with a compact mass of boats.

It is each gondolier's ambition to take his *padroni* as near to the music as possible, and so the very moment the barge appeared, instead of leaving a way open for it, every gondolier began to press towards it as vigorously as he could. The canal is here at its narrowest, and soon there was an absolute block : the barge could not come forward nor any gondola move back. In vain the police, scattered among the crowd, implored the gondoliers to move on. "Dagavanti, cari tosi !" ("Row ahead, dear boys !"), they cried ; "Avanti! avanti! giovannotti bravi !" ("Ahead, ahead,

fine lads!"). The men put their oars in the water, the blade flat, and made a great pretence at rowing, and shouted, "*Avanti! avanti!*" after the police; and all the walls echoed, "*Avanti! avanti.*" But not one would move an inch until his neighbour did; and so the whole mass became firmly jammed under the huge stone span of the Rialto, and the din grew indescribable. But presently a police commissioner in the middle of the throng put a speaking-trumpet to his lips, and above the turmoil these words rang clear, "*Pompa alla sinistra.*" Immediately from the barge came a jet of water, thrown well to the left by a powerful fire-engine; then a sudden scramble, cries of rage, a loosening of the crowd, and the barge moved on a yard or so.

At length, by dint of pumping, the singers reached the bridge. The Bengal lights were lit, and the heavy coloured smoke streamed out from under the arch. The electric light shot its clear shaft right down the Grand Canal and touched the palace fronts with a ghostly white. It fell, too, upon the upright figures of the gondoliers, hundreds of them, in every conceivable attitude of movement or repose; fleeting suggestions that would have made a sculptor's fortune could he have caught them as they passed. It was warm weather, and many of the men were in white linen jerseys and white trousers. These tall and graceful figures, their heads uncovered and their hair tossed back, standing erect and poised, the strong

light falling sharply upon the white of their dress and marking the curves, the heavy clouds of smoke curling slowly away, the serene blue night above it all,—combined to make a picture, confused, yet strange and beautiful, like something seen in dreams and not of this actual world.

After the Rialto is passed the interest slackens, and many boats turn off into the side canals. But there is a long journey yet before the barge; and not till one o'clock and later will it have reached the Salute and the mouth of the Grand Canal, where the lights are extinguished, and the weary singers are allowed to hurry to their homes.

III

The evening after the serenade was devoted to the illumination in the Piazza, a spectacle in its way as beautiful as any that had preceded it. The Piazza walls, the old and new Procuratie, and the newer front of Napoleon's ballroom, were sheets of living fire. Every curve and volute, every column, architrave, cornice, plinth, and pillar, were defined in myriads of tiny lamps, whose flames wavered together, now this way, now that, in the fitful puffs of the scirocco. The rippling of this sea of fire dazzled the eyes, and made them drunk with excess of light. Over the surface of this golden illumination flashed sudden jets of pale silver electricity. The façade of St. Mark's was wan and clear in the light of the

electric lamps, whose rays caught the curves of the cupolas, and hung them, like ghostly domes, high in the profound blue of the summer night. The doves, in wild alarm, shot like arrows of frosted argent across the spars of electricity. The ordinary Piazza lamps were globed in crimson; so the colours ran crimson, gold, silver, and above, the deep blue sky. The piazzetta had been left dark; and there the crowd might saunter when the blaze of the great square became too overpowering. Down the darkened vista one looked across the slumbering lagoon to San Giorgio, a mass of flames burning along the water in crimson, blue, and gold.

The illumination was a fitting close to this three-fold *fête*, so brilliant, so varied, so like a jewel. Venice had shown what she could do. In splendour and display, no less than in repose, she must ever be the

“Gemm’ atriatICA
Sposa del mar.”

ON THE LAGOON

THE BRENTA

THOUGH the lagoons were once the outlet for those rivers which drain the larger part of the Veneto, there is only one river that may now be justly called a river of the lagoons. A considerable part of the Brenta still discharges at Fusina by its ancient natural mouth ; the larger part finds its way to the sea by an artificial bed which carries it down to Brondolo.

The Brenta is intimately connected with Venice, and always has been so. From the Brenta used to come the water that supplied a large part of the city before the modern aqueduct was made ; and the banks of the Brenta were a favourite site for the villas of the Venetian gentry, where they passed the summer and the autumn months. The garden-like scenery of the river has always had a fascination for the Venetians. It appealed to that taste which loved the long, trimmed alley and the quaint-cut yews, and found the Alps "horrid," repellent, inhuman ; that old

Italian taste which carried the town into the country and cared for nature only when subdued and trimmed by man.

The custom of *villeggiatura* is almost universal. When the bathing season closes, every one, who can afford to do so, leaves Venice. It is and always has been the fashion, though in many respects it is not a reasonable one; for if Venice is hot, the mainland is hotter, and in the city the constant and kindly scirocco begins every day about noon, and continues to blow across the water till midnight, cooling and sweetening the air; while on the mainland the sun parches the ground and bakes the houses till they become like ovens, and it requires the whole night long to lower their temperature. It is true that during *villeggiatura* no one goes to bed till early morning. People begin their day about five o'clock in the evening, and carry it on till four the following morning. They flirt and promenade and play cards or music through the long declining twilight; but during the day the houses are hermetically sealed, all the green *scuri* closed, and the place lies dead and silent under the intolerable sun. They are fortunate who own villas on the slopes of the Alps behind Conegliano, or on the banks of the Piave. The air is cooler there; the view more exquisite, looking across the plain or, over the bosky and undulating country, up to the mountains; there is a sense of width and breathing-space that is not to

be found among the villas of the *pianura*, shut in between high rows of mulberry and poplar trees.

Villeggiatura used to be a luxury of the rich and noble; but with the corruption of manners which marked the opening of the eighteenth century, the taste spread to the middle class and became a perfect passion. The comedy of the day is full of episodes that centre round *villeggiatura*—the struggling and pinching for half a year; the women clamouring to be off; the father at his wits' end to find the means; the doubtful enjoyment of this pleasure so dearly bought; the flimsy gallantries and boneless intrigues; the pernicious mimicry of a corrupt society; the contessa has her *cicisbeo* and her *abbattino*, so madame must find her *zerbinotto*; a life that was good for no one;—and the only result of it that remains is the row of little houses, belonging to the Venetian middle class, which rise all along the Brenta, with here and there the palace of some nobleman breaking the long monotonous line by its more imposing façade. Most of these little houses are flimsy-looking structures, a brick and a half thick, stuccoed and painted in fanciful patterns with colours that scream. They each have a scrap of garden about the house, and a shrubbery of pines and laurestinums at one corner, where the family sit all day in the shade. On the ground floor is a large entrance hall, off which the other rooms open; it is dining-room, drawing-room, and passage all in one, the piazza of the household

where everyone meets. The windows on either side correspond, so that the air passes freely through the house; but this gives to the whole building a singularly unsubstantial appearance, as though it were some doll's-house made of *papier-mâché*. Beneath the summer sunlight and while inhabited, these little villas look bright and gay enough; but in winter they are wretched and dilapidated, the garden paths all weed-grown, the shrubbery a ruin of damp, decaying leaves.

The Brenta has always been popular, and it deserves its reputation. Where its banks are not overcrowded with houses the river resembles an English stream; it is not unlike the Upper Thames at Fairford, Lechlade, or Bablockhithe. In May and June the weeds begin to come up, and with the weeds the water-lilies, golden-globed or white; the banks are fringed with scented flags and fleurs-de-lys. As one rows up the stream swallows skim and flash over its quiet surface, just tipping the water with their wings; or the wash of the boat disturbs some bright-plumaged kingfisher, that darts away downstream, keeping close to the bank. Through vistas of green vine-leaves one catches fleeting glimpses of the Alps.

It is a populous river, and every now and then the straggling row of villas that lines its borders becomes knotted and grouped into a small village, clustering round its parish church. Among the most

famous of the greater palaces on the Brenta is the magnificent villa at Strà, a monument to the splendour and wealth of a princely Venetian family. The villa was built by the Pisani at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It must have required a royal revenue to maintain this vast Italian palace, with its inner courts; its wells covered in wrought iron; its great doors opening upon sweeps of lawn bordered with trees; its forty acres of garden; its orangeries and the inevitable maze winding between close-clipped privet hedges—all the luxury of a taste that loved sauntering. Upstairs the great hall is painted in fresco by Tiepolo, with the usual scattered allegorical subjects that this master loves. From this hall, through gates of massive metal, interminable suites of apartments open away on either side.

We can people these chambers and gardens with their eighteenth-century crowd of hooped and brocaded ladies, and powdered, laced, and lackadaisical men; and, with the help of Gozzi, Zanetti, and Goldoni, we may, in a measure, construct the life they led. A curious aimless life, whose chief object seemed to be in killing each day as it was born; a life devoid of strong emotions or excitements, fined away to inanity; a life that sought its greatest pleasure in chocolate and gossip.

A contemporary, Longo,¹ has left a vivid picture

¹ I am indebted for this reference to Sig. Molmenti's *La Storia di Venezia nella Vita Privata*, second edition, p. 475.

of this *villeggiatura* existence. He is describing the Villa Zola, where the Marquis Albergati is entertaining his sixty or seventy guests: "The course of life which they observed there was purely monastic. A scrupulous exactness in the preservation of order, gave greater excellence to the splendour of the host and the magnificence of his palace. At nine o'clock in the morning, punctually, a bell rang; this was the invitation to rise. There were two rooms where two servants were always ready, in waiting to comb and shave the guests. The first to come was the first served; woe to him who upset the order even upon so small a point. From the hairdressing-room the guests passed to the buffet, or coffee-room, where a waiter was always in attendance. When breakfast was finished and ten o'clock had struck, another bell rang, which was the signal that the host had entered his coffee-room, where he received in private. Thither all the guests betook themselves to wish their host good morning, and to make a second breakfast with him. At eleven a bell summoned them to Mass; and preceded by the marquis, all the guests passed into church. When Mass was finished, it was delightful to see how many village maids, neatly and fairly dressed, offered to their lord their posies of flowers, and were caressed by him and received some gift. Then back again to the coffee-room, where some betook themselves to a most moderate game at cards, while others plied the swing, or played at billiards,

or, to better purpose, retired to the study. At two o'clock another bell announced that the cooks had put the soup to boil; then followed invitations among the players for each other's company at table, and presently a few more strokes called them all to dinner. Many, indeed, were the dishes, and all delicate; the hand hesitated which to prefer. Serious discourse was abandoned during dinner, but not moderation; there reigned always gaiety mingled with good sense and unimpeachable morality. When the guests rose from table, the season of the year determined what should be done. In summer some went to sleep; others wandered among the alleys of hornbeam which surrounded the gardens, and waited for another bell to summon them to the grand promenade. In autumn the promenade began immediately after dinner. Some in carriages, some in sedans, some on horseback. Sometimes, too, they made a caravan; one took the kitchen pot in a sack, another the spit on his shoulder, another the *polenta* meal, another the water, another the wine, another the bird-net—in short, each one carried something that was needed to make and eat the *polenta* out in the country; and the food was seasoned with laughter and extemporaneous verse. When evening came they would gather their things together and return home to their various games. At two o'clock in the morning the party broke up, and each retired to his room."

Such was the life they led in a great country-house. An artificial life, where all the heart of existence seemed to have passed into the frigid externals that surrounded it; where freedom would have been bad manners; where all the movement of society was arranged and carried out in company, methodically, by order; where every detail was reduced to rule, as in a game of chess. Their literature was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; and no doubt the conversation and the *mots*, for each day's dinner, were carefully prepared and rehearsed during those hours when, by courtesy, the guests were supposed to be reposing or wandering in the wooded glades of the palace garden. Even their jokes were highly artificial. In this same Villa Zola, two broad staircases led up from the entrance hall, the one conducted to the bedrooms; but if you took the other, after climbing two hundred steps up to the top of the house, you found yourself face to face with a marble statue that grinned at your discomfiture.

It is not easy to sympathise with this last phase of a decaying society. It is even less easy to believe that such an existence could have afforded much pleasure to either host or guest. The host, it is true, was bound each year to invent some new order of life, to drill his regiment of guests and servants in some new manœuvres, to develop some further refinement of luxury in the arrangement of his rooms and of his table. And so these villas became

the cause of a ruinous expenditure to their owners —a ruin which bore its fruit in broken fortunes, and which leaves the great villas of the Brenta deserted and decaying.

FLOODS ON THE MAINLAND

FOR a week and a half it had been raining incessantly. Heavy masses of leaden cloud, driven up from the sea by the scirocco, swept over Venice towards the mountains, discharging a continual downpour of water upon the whole Venetian plain. Then came news of floods and disasters upon the Adige, the Brenta, and the Piave. "Quest' è un temporal che fa epoca" ("A storm that is making an epoch"), said a Venetian; and strongly urged a visit to the flooded districts. A companion was not difficult to find; for the hotels were full of storm-stayed Englishmen, who sat in sullen rows round the entrance halls, occasionally venting their spleen on the hall porter, and accumulating a natural though unjust hatred of Venice, where they were kept against their will. The companion found, we determined to take our chance and go as far as the train would carry us. How far that might be they could not tell us even at the station. It was a lovely morning, with a fresh wind from the west ruffling the lagoon and blowing through the railway carriage as the train crossed the bridge to Mestre.

Before the breeze the sky was clear and sunny, and flecked with clouds that seemed to have the very spirit of wind in their fleeces as they sped across the blue. Three stations beyond Venice, at a small place called Dolo, the train stopped. The buttresses of the railway bridge over the Brenta had begun to sink, and the line was blocked. But there was an abundance of carriages, and one of these was engaged to take us towards the Brenta, and show us what was to be seen of the floods.

The vintage was coming on; in another week the grapes would have been ready; and before the floods came, every one said that the promise was the finest they had known for forty years; the small wine merchants were selling their wine of last year cheap to make room for the expected overflow. Now to rescue any wine at all they had begun to press the grapes before they were fully ripe. But there were no signs of ruin to be seen until the road began to near the banks of Brenta. Everywhere the sunlight fell in broad flakes upon the rich green country. The hedgerows and cottage gardens were full of flowers—zinnias and twining convolvulus and white and purple altelle. In the middle of the road stood a country car, the oxen grazing quietly by the wayside, on the car an oblong vat full of grapes, and in the vat three men, bare-legged, pressing the red juice out to a sort of slow dance. The whole scene—the brilliant sky, the fresh wind, the smiling lads, and the quiet

oxen—looked so peaceful and secure; it was almost impossible to believe that these people had only just escaped from a destroying flood, and that not two miles away the entire country was in ruin and desolation.

At last the carriage reached the high river bank, passed up, and stopped. There was the Brenta rolling in angry brown foam over the ruined piers and masonry of a broken bridge. In this part of the country few of the rivers flow in their natural channels. For many centuries a process of canalisation has been carried on, and the rivers come down from the Alps in long, ugly reaches, perfectly straight and penned in between high artificial mounds of earth. Their beds are above the level of the surrounding land, and these earthworks alone prevent the country from becoming one vast swamp. The banks are very broad, and, on the waterside, are planted with rushes and willows to bind them together. When heavy rains or snows fall in the upper valleys of the Tyrolese Alps the water is forced out into the plain through the narrow gorges at Verona, Bassano, or Feltre; and, should the banks give way anywhere, the ruin is swift and complete.

During heavy floods, the dykes are patrolled day and night by relays of watchmen, who build for themselves rude shelter-huts of matting and a little straw. These watchmen camp together by threes, and relieve

one another in turns. Each has a lantern, which he fastens to an iron rod, and plants outside the hut, so that at night the river bank is dotted with these little groups of three flames swaying in the wind. The greatest difficulty and danger in guarding the bank is that all the mischief is done out of sight. The river, sweeping along, loosens a tiny piece of earth far down below the level of its surface. The water continues to bore at this hole, working deeper and deeper into the bank, until this is undermined. But the first notice that the watchers receive will be the subsidence of the whole upper mass of earth. Then in a few minutes the waters burst through, flowing far and wide over the vineyards and maize-fields, and making the breach broader every moment. Nothing can be done till the floods go down ; and then it is the work of many months to repair even one breach. There is only one way of saving the bank, supposing the watchmen to have discovered the mischief in time. The poplars and mulberry trees which grow in abundance in the meadows must be cut and carried to the top of the bank, and there laid in lines along the mound ; deep notches are then made in their trunks, and, where the bank shows signs of weakness, a rope is tied to the tree and firmly pegged down, the boughs are weighted with stones, and the whole mass is thrown into the water at the point of danger, forming a dam which thrusts

the current into the middle of the river again. It is an expensive remedy, but the only one which stands between the rich meadows and destruction.

On the bank by the broken bridge was a crowd of peasants. Each seemed anxious that the strangers should see the best of the sight ; and all were ready with various views as to where the most horrible disaster was to be found. Though it ruined them, this flood was a show, and more or less their property. Finally, we were directed along the bank for a couple of miles till we came opposite a breach in the earthen dyke, yawning and terrible, about two hundred and fifty yards wide, through which half the brown and angry flood poured itself out over the fields. There were houses standing deserted in the middle of the waste, others half fallen ; only the tops of the mulberry trees rose above the water, dotting the desolate expanse and shimmering in the breeze. Further away the campanili of Campo Lungo and other flooded villages shot up above the levels. On the side where we stood the water was lower ; and peasants were gathering the yellow pods of maize and heavy purple clusters of grapes in boats. Along the banks the vines and Indian corn lay piled. The Euganeans beyond Padua looked near and distinct, with purple outlines against the windy sky. The vast heaven of the Venetian plain stretched over all, fresh and sweet and flecked with a perfect foam of clouds, mirrored again in the ruinous lake at our

feet. The whole scene was wonderfully strange and beautiful ; but the brown flood rolling beside us had done such mischief as would take two years to repair. The autumn was coming on, the peasants' crops were gone, their houses ruined or damp.

These floods are a terrible scourge for the Veneto ; the one way in which nature seems to take vengeance on a favoured land, tempering prosperity with disaster.

FUSINA

THE railway bridge across the lagoon from Mestre to Venice ruined the traffic of more places than Mestre itself. Some six miles further south than Mestre, along the coast lies Lizza Fusina, once the point at which passengers from Padua to Venice took boat to finish their journey. The row to Fusina takes one through a little-frequented part of the lagoon. The broad water-space that opens away from the mouth of the Giudecca, apparently unbounded, is a famous fishing-ground, worked by a race of men whose solitary lives are varied only by the battle against winter cold or the sudden summer storm. One island lies between Venice and Fusina, San Giorgio in Alega. It was once a monastery, but its campanile has been pulled down and its church is used as a powder magazine. The island is garrisoned by a weekly relay of four soldiers and a sergeant. The men say that a week's duty there is worse than a fortnight's prison in Venice; and unless they are enamoured of nature, and care to record the endless variety of the sunsets, or to note the changes of sea and sky around them, it may be well so. The men for the most part look wistfully

over the wall at the boats that come and go between Venice and Fusina. But the island is a lovely object to those who are not compelled to make it their Patmos: and there a modern St. John might write a book of the revelations of nature; for from no other point near Venice do sunsets and sunrises, night and storm and darkness, the procession of the stars, offer themselves more freely to the view.

The canal that runs under the high brick wall of San Giorgio, past the corner where the Madonna stands with the baby in her arms, where St. George, in stone, charges and slays the dragon that is never slain, except in Carpaccio's picture, is used chiefly by the boats that bring the water of the Brenta into Venice. When little rain has fallen, and the wells run dry, the contractors, who are bound to keep four and a half feet of water in every well, find themselves obliged to carry the fresh supply from the Brenta, past Fusina, into the city.¹ It is a slow and laborious operation. The boats—long, hollow hulls, without a deck—are taken to Moranzana, a mile above Fusina. At Moranzana there is a lock, dividing the sweet water from the salt. The boats are moored beneath a large iron pipe, where the fresh water comes gushing out into the hull until the boat is full and its gunwale is sunk almost to the water level. Then the homeward journey begins. This cargo is so heavy that the men, unless they get the wind and tide with them,

¹ That was before the aqueduct was made.

have to take to the oars and plod wearily along like galley slaves, or the upper bench of a trireme's rowers, their long sweeps toilsomely ploughing through the water. The boats are so low in the sea that, should there be even a little wind, the water which reaches Venice is anything but fresh.

Fusina was once a flourishing village. It owned a large establishment for the reception of pilgrims. And here, too, was the famous *carro*, a machine with ropes and pulleys and inclined planes for hauling the heavier vessels from the Brenta into the lagoon; for the river, which flows into the sea at this point, had at one time a bar across its mouth. Next to Mestre, Fusina was the favourite route for reaching Venice; and it was by the way of the Brenta and Fusina that that charming and quaint old traveller, Mr. Fynes Moryson, passed from Padua to Venice about the year 1599. He thus describes the boat and the company he found on board:—The fare was one lira a head, and four soldi for an extra horse “to be drawn more swiftly. . . . The boat is covered with arched hatches; and there is very pleasant company, so as a man beware to give no offence; for otherwise the Lombards carry shirts of male, and being armed as if they were in a camp, are apt to revenge upon shameful advantages. But commonly there is pleasant discourse, and the proverb saith the boat shall be drowned when it carries neither monk, nor student, nor courtisan. . . . I remember a maide in the boat

crossed herselfe whensoever an old woman looked upon her, fearing she should be a witch ; whereat the passengers smiled, seeing the girle not only cross herselfe for feare, but thrust her crucifix towards the old woman's eyes."

It was from Fusina that Henry III. of France took his last look at the sea-city whose spell he never after could shake off. And it would have been difficult to find a better point from which to take a farewell view. Venice lay before him, backed by the Alps, the sharp pinnacles of the Dolomites, and, further away, the long ridges of Friulan snow. The city is just far enough off to be compassable at a single glance, gathered together into one flower with its campanili for stamens, yet not so distant as to be indistinct.

The beauty of the view from Fusina remains ; but all its houses have disappeared except the Custom House and one little wine-shop. There is no traffic now from Padua, and no strangers pass this way.¹ In the garden behind the wine-shop they grow melons of a kind much prized—sea-green globes with olive-grey vermiculations on the rind. Fusina stands between the sea and the land ; it is hard to say to which it most belongs, for the water runs up into the plain in marsh, and swamp, and winding canals that catch the light in silver patches, and break the monotony of the dusky levels ; while the plain runs down into the lagoon, thrusting long arms far out in the direction of

¹ The tram-line to Padua has changed this.

Venice. On the one hand lies the "living water," a surface of opaline grey; on the other, the "dead lagoon," a stretch of purple brown, ending in mist at the base of the Euganean Hills, those distant cones that served as landmarks to ships sailing to Padua from the sea. In autumn the colour of this vast landward plain, that is not wholly land, is crimson brown, marked by streaks of purple where the sea-lavender grows in an abundance. But in spring all its tones are paler and finer; faint green of the young grass that just shimmers over its surface like a veil of mist, as we may see the cloudy shimmer of blue-bells spread in many an English wood. Nearer, the colour is a little stronger, for the banks are covered with violets, ranunculus, star of Bethlehem, and many other flowers. Further up the Brenta you will find fleurs-de-lys fringing the river's edge. The larks are fond of this place, and sing triumphant songs as they mount against the sun; up, and up, and up, with the ascending notes; then comes the long cadenza as they settle down upon their nests.

In serene November weather a row back from Fusina to Venice is sure to be repaying. As the sun sinks towards the western horizon, the whole of that region becomes a golden aureole, in the middle of which are set the Euganean Hills, a pale, transparent green in the heart of the glory that surrounds them. The leafless trees on the shore by Fusina stand solitary and distinct against the sky, each branch and twig

relieved in black upon the brilliant background. The zenith is all a translucent blue—a blue that Fra Angelico may have seen in visions, but never rivalled, even when the colours were still fresh from his palette, so liquid and delicate and radiant is its tone. To the north are the Alps, hazily blue at their base but heavily powdered with snow upon their summits—a barrier of frost and cold. To the south, to seaward, the massive clouds of the scirocco lie piled, far away, billow upon billow touched to a rosy glow where the sunlight catches their edges. The railway bridge of brick and Istrian stone runs like a line of orange across the landscape. Nearer, the lagoon on either side of the canal is bare, and the dying seaweeds and the banks of mud are warmed to rich browns in the sunset. As the sun falls faster and faster to the horizon the water changes from grey to gold, from gold to orange, from orange to the deepest crimson of the pomegranate's core. A flash of fire strikes on the windows of Venice, that lies ahead, a flush of orange and rose upon its walls. Then in a second the sun is gone. There is a brief space of doubtful light while day hangs trembling in the balance. But night, with its first and solitary star, comes swiftly over the eastern horizon, and settles down in cold and silvery grey upon the broad lagoon, while the western skies still hold the dying daylight suspended in a haze of saffron, green, and blue.

A GHOST STORY OF THE LAGOONS

FOR many centuries the lagoons of Venice have been divided into districts for the purposes of fishing. These tracts of water are not distinguished by any boundaries visible to the eye; but their limits are well known to the fishermen who make their living upon them. In the shallower parts, where the oozy bed of the lagoon is left bare by each receding tide, the fishermen mark off a certain portion, and surround it by a palisade of wattled cane, called a *grisiola*. Inside this palisade the mud is dug into deep ditches, so that there shall always be water in them, even when the tide is low. These enclosures are called *valli*, and here the fish are driven in spring to spawn. Each *valle* has a little hut belonging to it, built either on piles or on forced soil, and made of bricks or of wattled cane, plastered with mud. The hut usually contains one square room, a door, and two windows. The fishermen require these cabins, for they sometimes spend three or four days together in the remote lagoon, sending their fish to market every morning by one of

their number, just as the deep-sea fishers of Chioggia do. In the fifteenth century there were sixty-one of these *valli*; but many have now been destroyed; and the high tides flow uninterruptedly over the larger portion of the lagoon surface. Those which still exist lie, for the most part, in the remote and little-frequented reaches, and follow closely the line of the mainland, while towards the *lidi* hardly any are in work.

The landscape of these distant fishing-grounds is vast and solitary. The sense of loneliness is heightened by the isolated hut, rising square from the water, the only habitation visible. On all sides the seeming-endless plain stretches away. For though these *valli* lie near the mainland, the earth is so low there that the eye perceives no difference of level, but passes on until it rests at length upon the faint blue Euganean Hills; or, on the other side, across the long grey water levels the sight may range—mile upon mile of pearly surface trending away—till on the very offing it finds Venice, a rosy-orange lotus basking on the water; or the Armenian convent, a burning crimson point; or, further still to the right, some few solitary trees by the port of Malamocco. In the sky, too, is the same feeling of vast expanse. Its tone is usually opaline grey, or filmy blue. But at sunrise or sunset come flashes of richer colour. Now flames of burnished bronze shoot suddenly and far across the levels as the sun's arc gains and surmounts the horizon; the bronze mellows into gold, as the sun

rises, and fades at length into the paler and clearer yellow of pure daylight. Or again, as the sun sinks, the whole heavens will be lit up and glow, an illuminated scroll in orange, crimson, and purple ; then that splendour too dies away and leaves the sky a pale translucent blue, just melting into green where the first star trembles.

It is a solitary life these fishermen lead in the middle of this vast sweep. Ranging the lagoon, you may meet them either quite alone or in groups of five or six dotted about at distances of four or five hundred yards. Their figures look strange as they stand rigid in the stern of the long, light boat, the prow tilted up out of the water ; each erect black silhouette with shoulder bare and fishing-spear poised motionless in hand ; the shadow still upon the lagoon below him ; and all around the mellowing grey of air and sky and sea. Or more strange and fascinating still when the men are fishing with nets, and the drumming and booming that they make to frighten the fish sounds like some weird incantation across the water.

And the very names of some of these *valli* have a suggestion of the uncanny about them—the Val dell' Inferno, or the Valle dei Sette Morti, for example. Of the Valle dei Sette Morti there is a story current among the gondoliers and fishermen.

There were six men fishing once in this "Valle" of the Seven Dead. They had with them a little boy,

the son of one of their number. The boy did not go fishing with his father, but stayed behind to take care of the hut, and to cook the food for the men when they returned. He spent the nights alone in the cabin, for most of the fishing was done between sunset and sunrise. One day, as the dawn was beginning across the water, the men stopped their fishing and began to row home with their load, as usual. As they rowed along they met the body of a drowned man going out to sea with the tide. They picked the body up and laid it on the prow, the head resting upon the arm, and rowed on slowly to the hut. The little boy was watching for them, and went down to the edge of the canal to meet them. He saw the body of the seventh man lying on the prow, but thought that he was asleep. So, when the boat came near, he cried to his father, "Breakfast is ready; come along!" and with that he turned and went back to the hut. The men followed the boy, and left the dead man lying on the prow. When they had sat down the boy looked round and said, "Where is the other man? Why don't you bring him in to breakfast too?" "Oh! isn't he here?" cried one; and then added, with a laugh, "You had better go and call him; he must be asleep." The boy went down to the canal, and shouted, "Why don't you come to breakfast? it is all ready for you." But the man on the prow never moved nor answered a word. So the boy returned to the hut, and said, "What is

the matter with the man? he won't answer." "Oh!" said they, "he is a deaf old fool. You must shout and swear at him." The boy went back again, and cried, "Come along, you fool; the others are waiting for you." But the man on the prow never moved nor answered a word. Then the boy ran back to the hut, and said, "Come, one of you; for I can't wake him up." But they laughed and answered, "Go out again and shake him by the leg; tell him we can't wait till doomsday for him." The boy went down to the water once more. He got into the boat and shook the man by the leg. Then the man turned and sat up on the prow, and said to the boy, "What do you want?" "Why on earth don't you come? Are they all to wait till doomsday for you?" "Go back and tell them that I am coming." So the boy went back to the hut and found the men laughing and joking. "Well! what did he say?" they cried. "It is all right," answered the boy; "he says he is coming." The men turned pale and looked at one another, and sat quite still and laughed no more. Then outside they heard footsteps coming slowly up the path. The door was pushed open, and the dead man came in and sat down in the boy's place, the seventh at the table. But the eyes of the other six were fixed upon the seventh, their guest. They could not move nor speak. Their gaze was fastened on the dead man's face. The blood flowed chiller and chiller in their veins till, as the sun arose, there

were seven dead men sitting round the table in the room.

Such was the story Antonio told one night rowing home from Chioggia. It has evidently taken a deep root in the imagination of the people. Nor can we wonder at this, nor at the weirdness of the tale, when we remember the solitary lives these fishermen lead, the limitless spaces around them, vast enough to fling the spirit back upon itself and set it creating. The only matter for astonishment is that there are not more such stories. In the north, out of similar surroundings, we should have a whole group of legends, wild, fantastic, or terrible as the tales which live among the fishers of the Hebrides or the wreckers and smugglers of the Devon and Cornish coasts. But a ghost story is rare in Venice; and this one would be difficult to match, even elsewhere in Italy. Possibly the external surroundings, the aspect of nature, may have something to do with this. The terrible is rarely found in Italian landscape, and seldom expressed in Italian art. The scenery of the lagoons is ample, soft, and caressing, but terrible, as possessing the austerer and more vengeful qualities of nature, it is not. These are the essential elements of the supernatural, and therefore it is that a genuine Italian ghost story is a rarity.

MALAMOCCO

MALAMOCCO is not often visited by strangers. Yet there is much beauty in the journey there, and a certain flavour of old-world interest in the place itself. The village wears the face of some gentle grey-haired old man, calm in the wisdom of years, and looks, one might almost fancy, across six miles of broad lagoon, at Venice, its younger rival, full spread and rosy on the water. Malamocco is indeed an older town than Venice—by which name we now speak of Rialto. Its origin is lost in obscurity. It never invented for itself, as Venice did, an astrological birth-hour and a mythic horoscope. Malamocco probably owed its growth to the needs of a population employed, then as now, in fishing and in pilotage. The position of Malamocco at the mouth of the Brenta gave the town its first political importance. The men of Malamocco held the key to Paduan sea traffic, and made the Paduan market feel the changes of their mood. During the ferment of the eighth century, Malamocco maintained a decided policy of its own. It became the centre of the democratic element in the lagoon cities. With the

triumph of the principles it supported, the town emerged as the capital of the federated sea townships. The brief reign of Malamocco burned up to one bright point, and then went out. When Pipin, son of Charlemagne, attacked the lagoons and tried to add them to his kingdom of Italy, it was from the men of Malamocco that he met with the stoutest resistance through six long winter months. By them he was beaten back to die of chagrin in Milan. Malamocco is the local habitation of all those myths that the Venetians have gathered about the story of Pipin's repulse. Round Malamocco and the coast thereby, the interest of this victory settles—a victory so important that it forms the starting-point of consecutive Venetian history.

The Venetian chroniclers have preserved a picturesque legend about the coming of the Frankish king to Malamocco. They say that at that time there lived in the city an old woman, who, by her astuteness, won for herself the strange title of "Rex Consilii" (King of Counsel). She was the only inhabitant whom Pipin found when he took the town. She had been left there, for she was kithless and alone; and it was nobody's business to take her, with the other women and children, to the safety of Poveglia or Rialto. Pipin asked her how deep the waters were in those parts, and how he should best get to Rialto. The old woman answered that she was poor, but for money she would show him the way. They struck

their bargain; and she told the king that between Malamocco and Rialto the water was shallow and the bed firm; and she advised him to throw a bridge across. The Franks began their bridge. But the waters were deep in many places, and the bed oozy. The wind dashed their boats together; the men sank in the muddy shoals. The Venetians swept down in their light boats, and cut the invaders to pieces, so that the canal was red with blood. The picture of this triumph still hangs on the walls of the Sala dello Scrutinio, in the Ducal Palace. The result of the victory was the consolidation of federal Venetia, and a reconciliation after the feuds which had divided the lagoons. The compromise found outward expression in the choice of Rialto as the capital. The government moved there in the year 813, and the reign and the history of Malamocco were over.

The pleasantest way to go to Malamocco is to take a sandolo, if you can. A sandolo is a small boat, lighter and smaller than a gondola, though, like a gondola, flat-bottomed; in it there is just enough room for two rowers. These sandoli have not the familiar *ferro* at the prow, but, instead, they run to a point with a knob of steel at the end, which the gondoliers spend hours in polishing till it shines like silver. The sandolo does not swim; it skims, or ducks sometimes, should there be a little sea on, like a *fisolo*, a shy water-bird of the diver species, that haunts the less-frequented reaches of the lagoon. As

the sandolo clears the Giudecca, the broad expanses of water open away, far as the eye can see, with no visible horizon; the *lidi* are too low for that; but the trees that grow upon them seem to stand up out of the watery plain, solitary as palms in the desert, or clumped together where some garden lies. The campanile of Malamocco shows right ahead; and far away to westward stand those islanded hills the Euganeans, into whose very base and between whose roots the waters seem to run. The breeze is blown straight down from the summits of these hills, and ripples the surface of the water, till the whole lagoon dances and dimples in sunlight. Overhead the vast Venetian sky is flecked with a soft fleece of clouds. An expansion of the chest and a deepening of the lung-draught comes with this fine air and the freedom of the boundless water space. But wind and tide are against the light craft as far as Poveglia. The gondoliers settle down to their work. Venice falls behind, its campanili rising higher and higher as the houses sink. You row past the shoal banks, undistinguishable from the canal, where the fishermen are staking the nets to catch the fish as the tide goes down, all with their trousers rolled high above their brown knees, the men and the boys splashing and floundering about. On the other side is a solitary crab-gatherer wading alone through the ooze, chanting a long, slow song as he trails his basket of net behind him.

Past the madhouse on San Clemente, and then the sandolo enters the main channel by which the Peninsular and Oriental steamers and all the larger vessels used to come to Venice. Here dredging is always going on, for the wash of these big ships draws the mud into the canal, and it is a constant labour and expense to keep it open. As the boat passes the dredger the men are gathered round a smoking bowl of beans. They laugh their salutation, "Ah! Signore, you never eat *fagioli*; have some." And all the while the engines never stop, but bucket after bucket of slime is emptied with splash and flop into the barges below. The mud has an evil smell, but it makes the wealth of the Malamoccan gardens, whence the splendid white asparagus is sent to Venice in spring. Soon Poveglia comes in sight—green as an emerald set in the grey water. The island is now the headquarters of the sanitary officials; and the rows of separate lazaretto huts stand like sentry-boxes, looking across the northern lagoon.

After passing Poveglia the boat will feel the tide with her; and ten minutes more brings one to the landing-place of Malamocco. Quiet and sleepy and clean; the people with a type distinctly their own; very gentle and friendly to strangers, but at heart seeming to say, "We are not Venetians, but Malamocchini." There is a piazza and two long broad streets. In the piazza a flagstaff, with St. Mark's

lion in gilt on the top, as a weathercock, looking now straight to Venice, with his paw firmly placed on his evangel. At the foot of the flagstaff is a quaint old well, with the Pisani superscription and coat, *per fesse*, azure and argent, a lion rampant counterchanged, engraved upon it. Almost all the house-doors have dolphins for knockers. You can walk down the main street, where the maize is drying, a yellow carpet spread on one side; where the women sit spinning and not chattering, like the Venetians, but quiet; where the dogs bask against the wall and snap at the flies; out by the arch over the Ponte del Borgo, past the gardens made of Venetian mud, till you reach the shore, and look down the long water-avenue of the Adriatic. To the far left is the faintest suggestion of the Istrian coast; in front, on the horizon, the orange sail of some Chioggian fishing-boat; to the right the long black strip of the mole that protects the entrance to the Malamoccan port. The waves break into spray, dash and rumble and thud below your feet, losing themselves among the huge blocks of Istrian stone. These boulders were brought here at great expense to keep the sea from eating through the island into the lagoon, and the long thread of creamy stone stretches away on either side, parting the blue sea from the grassy glacis of the fort.

If the breeze should hold good nothing is more

delightful than a sail back to Venice. After a glass of wine at the little *negozio* on the piazza, you go down to the landing-place once more. The sail is made, and the sandolo unlashed. Away it springs beneath the breeze, like a creature instinct with life, shaking all its plumes, laughing in the wind, plunging and rising as though it strove to fly. No rowing now, only lying flat down with the tiller and sheet in hand, watching the shifting landscape framed and unframed as the "harbour piles" rush past, or looking higher yet at the great chain of boundary Alps that stand marshalled behind Venice, whitely powdered with snow on some of the loftier peaks.

But, whatever Shelley may have thought, steering is not a purely mechanical process, and watching the Alps one is apt to forget where one is. A hail from the *dazio* guard-boat at San Clemente recalls the steersman. "A bordo!" borne up fine and shrill against the wind, a cry of "Orsa!" from the gondolier, and the sandolo's head comes up to the wind, and she drifts gently against the side of the high guard-boat. A *finanziere del mare*, in his coastguard dress, broad blue collar and yellow stripe, circles his arm round the flagstaff on the bow of his ship, and leans over the tiny craft, his golden brown Venetian hair blown in the wind, and his thick brown worsted stockings pulled up outside his trousers. There is nothing liable to *dazio*, however, on board our boat, and it is at once released. "Avanti pure!" and the

sandolo obeys. Six minutes more and it has sped down the Canal delle Grazie, passed the red brick corner by San Giorgio, and sailed into quiet water and the breezeless spaces of the Grand Canal.

BURANO

BURANO is an island, lying seven miles to the east of Venice, in that part of the lagoon which is called the *contrade*. The islands stand closer together here, and there is less open space of water and more oozy marsh than is to be found at the western end of the lagoon. The Sile and Piave flowed into the sea at this point, and the earth that they brought down with them has formed those innumerable little islets which lie around Burano. On the left-hand side as one leaves Venice, but far away across the plain, stand the Dolomitic Alps, Tofana, Pelmo, and Antelao, above Caprile and Cortina, sharp and clear-cut peaks or long serrated ridges, sometimes powdered with snow. From the top of the campanile of Torcello, that lies hard by Burano, one sees that the whole surface of the adjacent marshes is cut into squares by ditches, crossing each other at right angles. These ditches are breeding-beds for fish—*valli*, as they are technically called; and into them the fish are driven in spring to spawn. Here, too, the gentlemen of Venice find excellent wild-duck shooting in winter. It is usual to make up

a party of three or four guns, and to hire one of the many little huts which stand by the side of these *valli*. The sportsmen have to provision themselves with food and fur cloaks in abundance, for the winter nights are bitterly cold on the water; but the sport is usually good enough to keep them at it for three or four days together.

Burano is a populous place. In this respect it has fared better than its older neighbours, Mazzorbo—Urbs Major, the greater city—and Torcello. The town took its name from the Porta Boreana of Altino,—a city on the mainland, which was ruined by the Huns under Attila. Some of the people of Altino fled for refuge to the little town they had colonised, and left their villas and their pleasant shore, the

Æmula Bajanis Altini littora villis,

for ever. The Burano they fled to, however, was not the Burano of to-day, but a place which Constantine Porphyrogenitos calls Burano-on-the-Sea, somewhat nearer the coast than the present town. This name, Burano-on-the-Sea, indicates the danger to which the refuge city was exposed. The Buranelli found that the currents of the Sile and the Piave, combined with the action of the sea, were likely to eat away the island they had occupied. They were compelled to petition Mazzorbo for a piece of land, and there they built the modern Burano, owning a kind of depend-

ence on their benefactors. Time has reversed this order. Burano possesses a teeming population of about nine thousand inhabitants. It has annexed its older neighbour and lord, Mazzorbo, by a long wooden bridge, built on piles, and rising gradually in the middle to let the boats pass through. Seen from the low seat of a gondola, the bridge stands flat and hard against the sky, with perhaps a figure or two, abnormally large, upon it; like something out of a Japanese landscape, or like the bridge in the willow-pattern plates.

Mazzorbo, on the other hand, is an island city that is gone—a *città andata*—with hardly a house upon it except the little wine-shop where the men stop to drink a glass of wine, and moor their boats, piled high with loads of green sea-grass, before the door. From the window of the inn you look across the narrow canal to the red and grey brick wall on the further side. Over the wall hang pomegranates, flushing to crimson ripeness in the autumn, contrasting their rosy cheeks with the dark green ivy that is spread like a mantle for them to rest upon. Mazzorbo is all gardens, and the fruit-boats are laden and sent into Venice every morning, where their cargoes are sold under the Palace of the Camerlenghi, close by the Rialto.

Nothing in Venetia is more remarkable than the way in which the different islands of the lagoons preserve their own distinctive types. Burano and

Mazzorbo are joined together now; yet it is easy to distinguish the inhabitants of the one from the inhabitants of the other. The natives of Mazzorbo are quiet and gentle, with some of that mild Saturnian sweetness which seems to mingle in the blood of those who deal closely with the earth. They are also singularly beautiful, especially the family at the wine-shop. But four hundred yards away, and you are in another atmosphere of character. The Buranelli are quick, brusque, rough; with something of the saltiness and pungency of the sea on which they live. The streets are noisy and dirty. You will hear plenty of abuse on all sides. The boys are audacious, persistent, and tormenting as flies. The men of Burano have not a good reputation; and probably, if a collision occurs in the small canals of Venice, the gondolier will tell you that the offenders are *Buranei*, unless he chooses to fasten the blame on those other aquatic scapegoats, the *Chiozzotti*. This evil repute is hereditary. The magistrates of the old Republic found it difficult to preserve order among the women of Burano, who held their market in Venice, near their landing-place on the Fondamenta Nuova, and used to set the quarter by the ears with their quarrels.

Nor are the Buranelli beautiful as are the people of Mazzorbo, unless it be for a certain sculpturesque cleanness and firmness of limbs. Meeting them as they row back from the fishing, only a little more clothed than when they came out of the water, ten

or twelve boatfuls racing together who shall be first to reach Burano, the sculptor would find many suggestions for the moulding of muscles in play. Or, again, one may see them, a long line of six or seven men, towing the heavy barges, laden with lagoon mud that goes to fertilise the fields round Pordenone. They all bend with a will to the rope; the sunburned legs step together, splashing through the shallow water at the side of the canal. Defined thus, against the clear and pale blue sky, with a foreground of slowly moving water and the solitary trees of the *lidi* on either side, the figures of these towing men with the barge behind, sluggishly obeying their pull, recall some scene in Egypt: the slaves of Pharaoh labouring on the Nile.

There is something fine and bronze-like about the men of Burano, and they have, to counterbalance their evil repute, the fame of doing more work for less pay than any of the islanders of the lagoons. The men are chiefly engaged in fishing and in towing; and the women are not idle, though the noise they make would lead a stranger to think so. The lace trade, for which the town was once famous, shows signs of reviving; and that industry at present occupies a considerable number of the families. The sacristan of San Martino has some fine specimens of ancient lace to show the stranger who may be curious on this point; and the priests' robes are worth a visit, even by the uninitiated in the mysteries of lace.

Altogether Burano is a town which obviously takes care of itself, though the Venetians and other islanders bear it little goodwill.

The character of the Buranelli is firm-set enough. But their dialect is softened almost to the melting point. In their mouths Venetian, the Ionic of the Italian group of dialects, has been mollified until the ribs of the language, the consonants, are on the verge of disappearing altogether. The men of Burano are worse sinners in this respect than even the natives of Chioggia. They dwell upon the vowels, redoubling and prolonging them, so that their words seem to have no close, but die away in a kind of sigh. For instance, they call their own town Buraâ, instead of Buran. The effect is not unpleasant, but is rather too sweet and gripless for our northern ears.

One famous Venetian musician took his name from the island of Burano—"brave" Galuppi Baldasare, called the Buranello. There is hardly a pleasanter way of spending a lazy afternoon in Venice than a row to his birthplace, especially if the Friulan Alps be clear and should a sunset glorify the waters on the homeward journey.

THE SILE AND JESOLO

THE many rivers of the Venetian plain fall into three distinctly marked types. The majority are mountain streams or torrents, which, starting high up among the fastnesses of the Dolomites, the Julian and the Rhætian Alps, descend upon the lowlands in ever-growing volume, as they drain the mountain slopes; they are genuine rivers all the way from their earliest foaming streamlets to their slow, meandering course across the plain that brings them to the Adriatic. Such are the larger rivers—the Adige, the Brenta, the Piave, and the Tagliamento. But there is another kind of river in the Veneto, which descends from no ‘high mountain-cradle’ in continuous open-air course, but bursts, a full-grown flood, from the very base of the limestone crags which so often rise abruptly out of the levels. Rivers of this nature are, of course, fed by hidden springs and drain the mountains internally, leaving their southern slopes all bare and arid in the parching sun. Such are the Meschio and the Livenza, the one rising near Serravalle in a deep, transparent pool, whose waters are the colour of the tourmaline, the other bursting out in a triple flood from the crags near Polcenigo,

beyond Sacile. There is a legend among the peasants that the water comes under the mountains from Belluno, higher up among the Dolomites. "Oritur liquentia," says Sabellico, writing in the fifteenth century, "in carnorum finibus haud longe a Pulcinico tribus uberrimis fontibus qui ex bellunensi agro subterraneo meatu fluere creduntur." Between these two well-defined types we find a few streams such as the Sile, the Zero, the Dese, which neither come down from the mountains nor spring from their roots. Their sources are of the nature of artesian wells forcing up fountains of water from the gravelly stratum which underlies the Venetian plain. They rise actually in the plain, in large tracts of swamp and marsh land, and urge their way through beds of rushes till they have acquired volume enough to delve a sinuous channel down to the sea.

The sources of the Sile lie near Albaredo, on the Treviso-Castelfranco line, but by the time it has reached Quinto the river has grown to a noble body of translucent water. It looks not so much like a river as like a flowing lake, for the flood spreads widely over the level lands and has no well-defined banks; paths are carried on artificial mounds between one part of the stream and another; the water is ever brimming and full on either hand, flowing with a deep persistent lapse of tide,

Inter arundineasque comas, gravidumque papaver,
Et tacitos sine labe lacus sine murnure rivos.

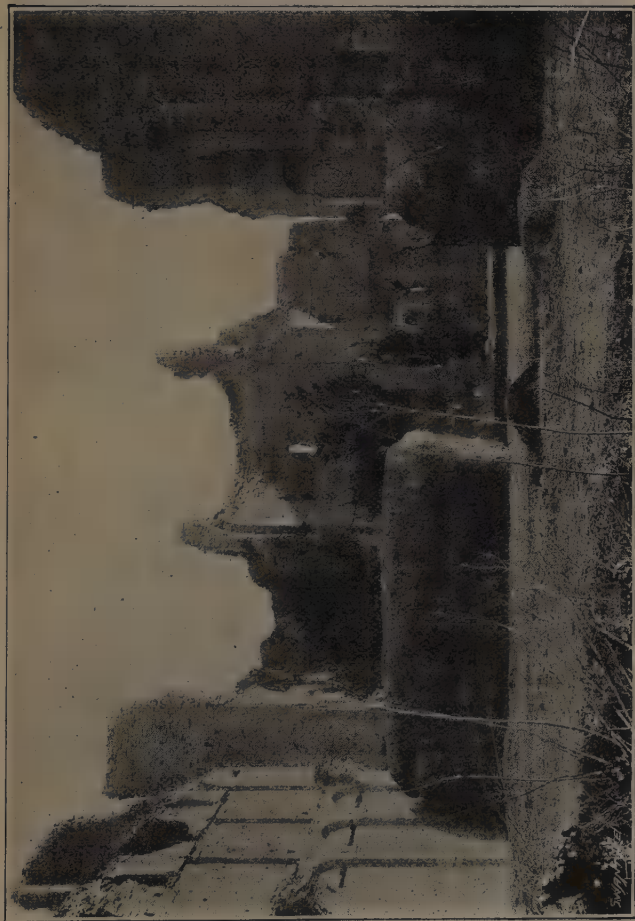
Quinto is extremely beautiful, either in spring, when the young green of the plane-trees is reflected on the silent surface of its waters, or in autumn, when all is gold and russet-brown that stain them to the hues of copper and bronze. The mills are the great feature of the place, and the splash of the mill-wheel and the dazzling cascade of diamond drops make a sight and a sound that keep one lingering long upon the miller's bridge watching the exquisite sinuous curves of the green water-weed tresses. Quinto is famous for its eels and fresh-water cray-fish, and the little osteria on the banks of the flowing lake is quite able to furnish an excellent lunch before one drives the five miles back to Treviso.

At Treviso the Sile is joined by another fast-flowing stream, the Cagnano. The stream is now called the Botteniga, and considering that Treviso is only thirty-four feet above the level of the sea and at least fifteen miles distant from it as the crow flies and thirty by the water-course, the rush of these two rivers is very remarkable. From Treviso the Sile delves its way in innumerable curves past Casier, Cendon, Casale, San Michele, down to the lagoon at Portegrandi. The banks are high and grown with willows, and if you are coming down from Treviso in a gondola or sandolo, there is not much to be seen on either hand, save the beautiful curves of the river itself, its swirl of green water among the willow roots, and now and then the flash of deep ultramarine blue on

the wing of a kingfisher. At Casale there is a great tower of splendid thirteenth-century brickwork, built, no doubt, to command one of the important ferries; while from the other ferry, Cendon, a little before you come to Casale, you can easily reach the great Giustinian Castle at Roncade, a vast courtyard surrounded by mediæval brick walls with massive gate and corner towers, and inside it a pure Palladian villa as dwelling-house.

At Portegrandi the Sile used to enter the lagoon, and flowing by Monte d'Oro, Torcello, Mazzorbo, and Burano, found its way to sea at Tre Porti. The early importance of these ancient lagoon villages is partly explained by the fact that the Sile passed through them and made a water communication between the mainland round Treviso and the sea. But when the Venetians determined to divert the larger rivers from the lagoon, partly to prevent it from silting up and partly to combat malaria, they dug the great canal that runs from Portegrandi due east and sends the waters of the Sile into the old bed of the Piave at Capo Sile.

As in the greater world so in the lagoon of Venice: the movement of peoples, of civilisation, of trade has been gradually from east to west. Long before the modern town of Venice was more than a few fisher-huts on the islands of Rialto, there were important townships in the eastern lagoon far surpassing the future capital. Earliest among these were the rival



RUINS OF JESOLO

cities of Heraclea and Jesolo. Of Heraclea nothing remains but the legend of ruins to be seen beneath the water. The town was founded in 688, and destroyed by its neighbour, Jesolo, in 805, about the time that the concentration of the lagoon townships was taking place at Rialto. It was rebuilt as Cittanova, but was damaged by fire, plundered by the Huns in 903, and malaria and floods came to complete the work of obliteration. At Fossa Nova, near where Heraclea must once have stood, there is nothing now but marshy soil. Jesolo (Equilius) survived its rival and became a place of some importance; it was nearer the sea and commanded the old mouth of the Piave. The large lagoon of Dragojesolo gave it salt and fish and waterfowl in abundance. It was erected into a See as early as 667, but its bishop refused obedience to his metropolitan at Grado, and was excommunicated. Jesolo suffered when its rival was destroyed by the Huns. The barbarians came down the Piave in coracles (*pellicii navibus*) and burned first Heraclea, and then Jesolo. The town remained an episcopal See down to 1476, when the Venetian Pope Barbo, Paul II., suppressed it, and merged it in the Venetian Patriarchate. Jesolo must have been a place of moment, for we hear of thirty-two noble Jesolan families enrolled in the Venetian nobility, and forty-two churches in its streets. That is probably an exaggeration, but the ruins of the one great church which still remain, point to a wealth and prosperity

which were considerable. Its decline may be attributed to the growing importance of Venice, which gradually absorbed all the smaller lagoon townships; to the silting up of the Piave bed and the consequent disappearance of the port, and to the ravages of malaria. Anyway, by 1430, "Where the piazza once was," says Marco Cornaro, a contemporary, "and indeed all about, they sow corn"; and Sabellico records a little later the "*ruinæ ingentes et grandia edificiorum vestigia quæ a veprium et ederarum complexu per sese magis suam magnitudinem quam humano auxilio adhuc indicant.*" No doubt both town and church served as quarry for the growing city of Venice.

The ruins of Jesolo lie close by the modern village of Cavazuccherina, which takes its name from the channel cut by the engineer Zuccherò, in 1537, to unite the old and new beds of the Piave between Jesolo and Cortellazzo. The best way to get to Jesolo is to take the little steamer for Cavazuccherina. It starts from the Fondamente Nuove early in the morning, and the journey occupies a little over three hours. It is a pleasant expedition in itself, apart from the interesting ruins at the end; for if the morning is fine you will have on your left hand all the way the great barrier peaks of the Alps from Carnia to the mountains west of Vicenza. The steamer passes San Michele, Burano, Mazzorbo, and Torcello, then, entering the old bed of the Sile, makes for Portegrandi. High beds of reeds on either side hedge

in the narrow channel. As the down-draw of the steamer sucks the stalks inwards to the stream, the heavy purple-tasselled heads bow and seem to make obeisance to the passer-by. Torcello's solitary tower and high-roofed basilica sink gradually away behind you, and on the right you will see all that is left of Altino and its "villas that outvied the buildings of Baia." It is a lone-looking country—a no man's land; so flat is the landscape ahead that it seems as though one were nearing the edge of the world.

At the lock of Portegrandi you enter the canal that takes you and the Sile into the Piave, and an hour more brings you to Cavazuccherina.

The ruins of the great church stand in a field about ten minutes' walk from the landing-place. There are farm buildings round about the church, and farm operations are constantly going on; hay being stacked in the nave, or rice being tossed on the drying-floor; brown spray of grain flung up against the clear blue sky from large wooden shovels, the heavier core falling back in heaps, and the dust blown lightly away by the wind. The church must have been nearly as big as St. Mark's. It was dedicated to the Virgin, and cannot be earlier than the ninth century. As it was probably sacked by the Huns in the tenth, its life was a brief one. The transepts and tribune, with its single apse, are fairly intact. The transept windows recall those of St. Mark's aisles with tiers of equal lights. The north wall of the nave is

still standing, and one can trace the foundations of the narthex and of the campanile. Hardly any decoration remains : a portion of an ornamental course, two columns of Greek marble, a foliated bracket, some faint traces of fresco in the northern transept—that is all. The rest has been pillaged for the good of Venice. Seen from outside, the east end, with its finely proportioned apse, is a noble piece of brick-work.

But now, as when Sabellico wrote at the close of 1400, the whole building is embraced by a luxuriant growth of bramble and of ivy.

On a hot autumn afternoon, in the stillness of this extreme eastern lagoon, with the vast sky overhead, the vast water expanse of Dragojesolo before you, the music of the bees in ivy bloom, suddenly recalls the vision of some temple on the Nile, Abydos or Denderah, where

The hum of bees in the desert silence
Envelopes the fane in a mist of sound.

IN THE COUNTRY

COUNTRY OUTINGS

THE Venetian plain and the mainland that borders the lagoon, although it does not seize the traveller and compel a recognition of its beauty on the moment, yet possesses a character and a beauty of its own which longer acquaintance will reveal. There is a certain charm in the way the land rises by almost imperceptible gradations from the level of the lagoon. The difference of level is so slight, that the water seems to hesitate whether it shall let itself become dry land, while the land is in doubt whether it shall not slip into the sea. In fact, the beauty of the Venetian plain is the beauty of various levels, which the eye feels here as it hardly can anywhere else; the long level of the water, the long and gentle inclination of the land, the sudden upspring of the Alpine barrier, closing all to the north, in striking contrast to the far horizon of the south, that interminable expanse where sea and sky are mingled and lost, the one in the other; while over all hangs the vast dome of the Venetian heavens, resting upon the

Alpine summits on the one hand, on the long sea level on the other. It is not in the beauty of its parts that the Venetian plain excels; its charm is the charm of large spaces, and the plain should be seen from some height, whence its entirety may be grasped, if that charm is to be felt as it deserves to be. But even in its details the plain has qualities and a character of its own, though not those qualities which the Teutonic taste may most enjoy. It lacks the spontaneity, the naturalness of an English landscape. Its character is formal and artificial; its fields are square, they have no promontories of coppice, no unexpected bays of grass land stretching into the heart of the woods. Its roads are straight and rigidly bordered with poplar trees; its streams are banked, and look too like canals. But the ditches which fringe the long straight roads are rich and brimming with flowers and water-weeds; if you stop to look at them their abundance tangles you. The roads and their borders remind one of a Renaissance pilaster, where all the artist's skill has been lavished on the adornment of a basis that is in itself severe and cold. On the other hand, there is something structural in the decorations of an English landscape—the windings of the road, the interrupting brooks, the richness and variety of the foliage; these are, in fact, the landscape, the structure and the adornment both in one. In short, if we may pursue the simile of the arts, the landscape of England is Gothic, the land-

scape of the Venetian plain is Renaissance in character.

The Italians are a town-loving people. But they have always taken a great delight in making parties to spend a day or two in the country. These country expeditions form a sort of conventional setting for many Italian novels. The Venetian people share the general taste; and besides their supper parties, the other great amusement of the gondoliers and their friends is a day's expedition into the country. Many of the Venetians take the keenest delight in the fields and trees and long expanses of greenery. Green is the one colour which is rare in their native landscape; and its habitual absence renders Venetian eyes peculiarly sensitive to its charm; they take a physical pleasure in the verdurous richness of the plain. Not that they explain the matter thus, but they show their condition plainly enough by their constant exclamations of "*bei boschi*," or "*O che bel pra*." The other point of interest which they find in these country voyages is the custom of the towns they visit. Being themselves rigid observers of the *costume Veneziano*, they are acutely aware of all the infinitesimal varieties of habit whereby one Italian town distinguishes itself from its neighbours, and assures itself of its own individuality. The Venetian plain is full of ancient cities, beautiful in themselves and interesting for their customs, the quality of their wine or their manner of making bread;

and so the choice is a wide one. It may be Este, Monselice, Vicenza, or even Verona, to the west, Castelfranco, Bassano Schio, Pordenone, Udine, to the north and east.

These expeditions are expensive, and the Venetians spend freely when about them; their open-handedness limits the number of times that they can afford a day in the country, which is, at most, twice a year. The season chosen is spring or autumn; and the occasion is either the winding-up of a gondoliers' bank or else the meeting of one of those clubs called *Marit' e Moglie*, a society of friends and their wives, formed especially for these expeditions. The company chooses a head; and he arranges the day and the place, in accordance with the amount of money at his disposal. They are sure of a welcome wherever they go; for the Venetians make themselves popular on the mainland; and their advent, and noise, and songs are a pleasant break on the monotony of many a quiet village of the plain. But even if their welcome were not a ready one, they would take care to secure punctual and submissive attention. They are prompt to stand upon their dignity at a moment's notice and give themselves abundant airs; one would almost suppose that they remembered the fact that all these cities at one time owned the sway of Venice. It is a perilous thing for a landlord to show them less than the greatest attention. I remember once at Castelfranco a fair was going on in

the market-place; the landlord of the "Spada" let his best room to a company of Venetian gondoliers, but let the balcony to another party and forgot to mention the fact, which only transpired when supper was on the table. The whole party walked out of the house and over the way to the rival inn, leaving the landlord to do what he chose with a supper for fourteen thrown upon his hands. The gondoliers have a great capacity for finding out where the best food and wine is to be got; and travelling about among these small villages and out-of-the-way towns one cannot do better than go where they go. When the party arrives at their inn, the *capo* sends for the landlord, and orders supper, which, of course, is regulated by *costume*, *manzo*, rice and chicken being the invariable rule. He also tastes and chooses the wine, seals up a small bottleful, and puts it in his pocket. This sample bottle is placed on the table at supper-time, and referred to if the landlord is suspected of changing the quality as the feast goes on.

Too often, it must be confessed, time hangs heavily on the party, and spirits are apt to run low. But supper, the climax of the day, comes to pick them up again; and after supper songs and a dance; and then the scramble to catch the last train, which takes the party back to Venice somewhere about midnight.

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

THE point of most vital importance to a gondolier in the establishment of his business is to find a permanent master. The *traghetto* is no longer so fruitful a source of gain as it used to be. The iron bridges and the steamboats have depreciated its paying power. The old proverb of the gondoliers, "Il traghetto è un buon padrone, però bisogna servirlo bene," no longer applies; with the very best service possible, the *paron traghetto* cannot be calculated to pay, on an average, more than two and a half to three lire a day. It is therefore of every importance to find a permanent *paron*, whose wages will be higher, and not fluctuating. And success or failure in the profession of gondolier depends upon the ability or inability to find such a *paron*.

There are two classes of *padroni* in the market—the native and the foreign. The native will be secured by recommendation and interest; the foreign must be fished for at the hotels or on the piazzetta. Of the two, a gondolier will probably tell you that he prefers a foreign master, though the reasons which govern him are not entirely sound. The foreigner, it

is true, will pay him more for his work ; he will probably not possess a gondola of his own ; and in making the bargain will very likely agree for the full tariff of five lire a day. Whereas a native would be certain to bargain down to three and a half or four lire, at the most, even supposing that he does not possess his own gondola, which he is nearly certain to do ; and in that case the gondolier could not look for more than two or two and a half lire a day for his service. With a foreign master the gondolier will very likely get more of his own way, will be in a position of greater confidence, for he knows the town, while his master does not ; and this, of course, leaves a large amount of patronage in his hands, which his neighbours are not slow to bid for, thereby increasing his social importance. Whereas, in the house of a native master, the work will be much harder, later hours at night, larger entrance halls to clean, more boats to look after, and all the internal economy of the house quite beyond his reach, in the hands of a major-domo. But the native master is more permanent than the foreigner, and infinitely more powerful in Venice. If he chooses he can do much for the interest of his servants.

The foreigner has the repute of spoiling his servants for native service. However that may be, the foreigner need not spoil them for himself. He will probably find them admirable for his purpose, saving him an infinity of small trouble, and repaying

confidence with honesty. They appreciate thoroughly, and generally without abusing it, the freedom and carelessness with which foreigners are apt to live in Venice; induced to do so by the lazy charm of the place itself, and partly, also, because they find themselves in holiday humour, having thrown aside the trammels and boredom of their own households at home. The gondolier will probably know too much about his native master, who is living in his native place, with all his relations close about him, his business to do, and his position to maintain. There is a very bitter proverb, "*Pompa di servitù miseria insegna*," which sums up the price both servant and master have to pay for supporting that outward pomp, which is no obligation upon a stranger in a strange land, but which most of the Italian nobility consider as incumbent upon their position.

If the gondolier does fall to a native *padrone*, he greatly prefers a Venetian nobleman for his master. It is remarkable how well these men are acquainted with the relative antiquity of their noble houses. They respond deep down in their consciousness to the historic names of Zustinian, Morosini, Contarini, Gradenigo, Grimani, Memmo, or Soranzo; and are fully alive to the *parvenu* nobility of others. But though a large number of the ancient houses are still represented, far many more than is generally supposed, yet their glory has departed, and it is possible to count on one's fingers the great families that still

survive with any semblance of their ancient splendour.

The earliest nobility of Venice were the twenty-four families who, before the year 697, ruled as tribunes over the twelve islands that formed the Confederation of the Venetian lagoons. These twenty-four families constituted the basis and origin of Venetian nobility. Some of these ancient houses are still represented. But it was not till the close of the thirteenth century, in the year 1296, that the Venetian aristocracy took the rigid and definite form under which it is best known. At that date many families which were not noble had acquired importance in the commonwealth through their riches, and had won for themselves a chief place in the management of the State. These determined to close the doors of office against all new-comers, and to establish themselves as sole and permanent rulers of Venice. This they did by a decree which provided that those who then sat in the Great Council, or who could prove that a paternal ancestor had at one time sat, should alone be eligible in future as members of that Council. As all the principal offices of state were filled from among the councillors, this act created a close oligarchy and gave the new and self-ennobled aristocracy a monopoly of government. The Great Council thus became the basis of the Venetian nobility; the only title of a Venetian grandee was "Nobile del nostro Maggior Consiglio."

But, although they were forced to bend before the new aristocracy, the twenty-four ancient and noble families still maintained the distinction of their ancestry. They called themselves the "Old Houses," to mark the difference between them and the more recent nobility; they formed, as it were, a caste inside the aristocracy.

The moment the noble order was thus closed, admission to its ranks became an object of desire to those who were left outside. When the State was in difficulties, the government could hold out no stronger bribe to induce the citizens to make an effort than the promise to ennoble those families which should be most distinguished by their zeal. But such additions to the patriciate were of rare occurrence, and only happened thrice, in any great numbers. For the most part, admission to the order of Venetian nobility was reserved as a compliment to be bestowed on foreign princes or distinguished generals.

The Venetian aristocracy guarded their privilege most jealously. And, to secure the perfect purity and legitimacy of their blood, they established a register in which the nobles were bound to inscribe the names of all their sons born in wedlock. This register, the origin of the *Libro d' Oro*, was placed under the charge of three officials, the "Advocates of State," who thus became a kind of Heralds' College. As may well be imagined, some noble families which had sunk in the world, either through poverty or

other causes, failed to comply with this regulation. Their descendants frequently found it a matter of difficulty to establish their nobility, and their title to a seat in the Great Council. The most ready way of doing so, was to prove direct descent in the male line from someone whose name appeared on the rolls as a member of the Council. But, failing this, two other methods of proving nobility were allowed. A law of the Republic, dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century, required all nobles to keep weapons, both of offence and defence, ready in their houses, either attached to the doors or hung upon the walls of the entrance hall. A visitation of these arms was made once a year. The people were strictly forbidden to possess weapons; therefore any one who could prove that an ancestor had maintained arms in his house was held to have established his nobility. The second method was by demonstrating that an ancestor had paid all the special government taxes levied upon that noble house whose name the petitioner claimed.

The Advocates of State seem to have grown careless in the discharge of their duties, and, in the year 1506, the Council of Ten issued an order setting forth the necessity for purifying the noble blood. For this purpose a new arrangement of the registers was commenced, and here begins the *Libro d' Oro* which at the present moment exists in the archives of Venice. It contains no reference to the origin

of families, no pedigrees, no blazons, and it is not of a very early date. It consists solely of two series of certificates—those of the legitimate births, and those of the marriages which took place in every noble Venetian house. The certificates bear the attestations of the three Advocates of State; they are written chiefly on parchment and bound in a number of volumes. These volumes run from the beginning of the sixteenth century down to the fall of the Republic; and for that period they are complete and authoritative. But there is nothing antique nor splendid about the books themselves, nor do they contain any references to remote antiquity. Such references were not necessary at the period when this series of documents was begun, because the more ancient registers, titles, and pedigrees were then in existence. They have all disappeared now; and it is conjectured that they were burned, at the foot of the Tree of Liberty, on the Piazza of St. Mark in the year 1797, just before the Napoleonic storm burst over Venice. It is not to the Libro d' Oro of to-day that we must look for the early history or traditions of the Venetian nobility. The principal sources to which we are obliged to turn are the genealogical works compiled before 1797, and based, we may hope, upon the State papers which were then destroyed. Among these, the names of three authorities stand out with special lustre—Marco Barbaro, the author of *The Origin and Descent of the Patrician Families*,

Girolamo Priuli, and Alessandro Capellari, compiler of *The Venetian Capitol, wherein you have the Arms the Origin, the series of Illustrious Gentlemen, Native and Foreign*. The works of these writers might with justice be called the Libri d' Oro of Venetian nobility.

The noble families which still survive the ruin of the last century have, many of them, and the best of them, come to regard Venice as a place for a few months' sojourn. They go there for the amusements of society; but their heart and their business is no longer there. They have, in many cases, adopted a country life, owning property on the mainland, and devoting all their great and hereditary capacity for commerce, to the rearing of cattle, the growth of crops, the making of wine. They are interested in experiments in silk growing, or ensilage; and spend their money freely on model farmsteads. The Government encourages the movement by offering agricultural prizes; and the economy of these Venetian farms is admirable. But Venice itself suffers somewhat. The nobles no longer centre there; they shrink from supporting commercial ventures; and the wealth and traffic of the city are passing into the hands of Jews.

The best of the Venetian noblemen have carried the strong sense and activity of their race into the country. It is a pleasure to see them there. The portrait of the ideal nobleman of to-day is a finer

picture than those of his senatorial ancestors in crimson robes, that look at you with heavy, sensuous faces out of Titian's and Tintoretto's canvases. There is the same haughtiness, it is true, and boundless self-esteem; the same practical power, and hardness of wit; the same unbending, masterful temper; the softness and geniality of life are absent in both; but the habit and character of the modern is healthier, sounder, more charged with open air, than the habit and character of his elder ancestor.

The count of our fancy, let us say, is a tall man with grizzled hair and keen eyes and a rapid manner. For choice he uses the pure Venetian dialect, and affects a rough exterior. He is married to a lady of very ancient nobility, and has no children. He owns a palace on the Grand Canal; a large house built round a courtyard, kept scrupulously clean. The various floors are let to other families; the count himself reserves the top story, and lives there when he comes to Venice. That is seldom, for he hates the town, and all his heart is in his country-place among the spurs of the Alps. His Venetian palace is chiefly interesting to him for the constant repairs, alterations, and improvements of which it is susceptible; here a drain, there a window; here a fresh coat of plaster, or there a new magazine. He is always doing something to it, inside or out. It is a testimony to the excellent architecture of the Venetian houses that the whole palace has not come down with

a run. The count comes to Venice for two months in the winter, chiefly *per pacificare la contessa*. He gives one or two large entertainments, and, on the slightest pretext, escapes again to the country. When he is away the contessa lives in the back rooms; to the front, overlooking the canal, all the outside shutters are closed, and the solitary little lamp, that ought to light the vast entrance, is never lit, for the contessa is not supposed to go out; she may bargain for fish inside her own courtyard *e po basta*. The whole place looks silent and dead. The count's loud voice was the only thing that gave it life, as he tramped through the court on his way to early Mass, wrapped in his huge rough mantle.

Should business, however—say the purchase of wine—take one to the count's country-place, the matter is very different. A smart carriage and pair of iron-grey ponies are at the station, with an alert and friendly coachman, bred on the place—the count rears everything himself. The ponies are excellent goers, and consume the long white road that leads from the station on the plain to the first undulations of the hills. All the way the coachman points out the palazzo of Count this, or the castle of Marchese that. For this man, the count, his *padrone*, his deeds and his belongings, serve as a measuring-rod by which he judges the world. That large white, half-castellated building on the hill, belongs to an ancient feudal family, and on their dining-room wall are traced,

in ominous red, the words, "Hostium cruore." As the road reaches the hills, the oak and acacia woods close round. The whole country is broken into dells and dingles, full of flowers, with here and there a clearing for a vineyard. The wine of the *colli* is famous; but the cost of reclaiming and planting the hillside raises the price somewhat above the ordinary.

The count's country palace is a large square block of building, plain and white, standing in the middle of a small village, near the Municipio, near the market-place, near the mill upon the torrent. A large arched carriage-way, closed by great doors at the further end, leads into the courtyard of the house. Round this archway all the loafers of the town are gathered, lazily watching the haggling for yards of cotton, for gay handkerchiefs, for figs and melons, that is going on at the market stalls. The countess watches the same from her window on the third floor. Inside the courtyard, which is long and narrow, is a detached building, from which comes a buzz and a whirring of wheels, and a horrible heavy smell. This is the count's *filanda*, or silk-mill, where the thread is wound off the cocoons. The count's achievement, a coat noble in Venetian history, is painted above the door.

Presently the big gates fly open again; in rattles the count, with his strong country carriage and stout cob. He has been out and about his farms since five

o'clock in the morning. "Ciao! bon di," he cries, as he drives right up to the stable door. Then he shouts for his servants; out runs the groom, down comes his man with a pair of shoes in his hand. The count pulls off one heavy topboot, his valet the other; and all the while the groom is taking the horse out of the shafts; and if the boot-changing is not finished in time the count and his boots and his valet will all be wheeled away to the place where the carriage is washed; for everyone is in a hurry here, and the count grudges a moment's time. His servants are as quick as himself, and the groom is buzzing and hissing round the carriage wheels before his master has reached the door of his back stair, which he uses by preference. There is a grand staircase, but it is all dark, the doors fastened, the shutters closed. There are many swinging doors on the back stair, and each one has a bell, so that no one can come in unannounced. Most of the rooms in the palace are locked, and the count keeps the master-key. His own study is locked, but he opens the door and shows one into the room where all his business is done, and where he plunges into terms for the wine without a moment's delay. It is a bare room, with a plain wooden table, three plain chairs, and a sofa-bed, a map of the Black Sea, and two birds in cages. He is a true Venetian—birds are his only pets. Behind the table are rows of ledgers, silk accounts, wine accounts, farm accounts. There are many windows to the room, and the owner

can observe all that goes on in the market-place or in his own courtyard.

Nothing pleases the count more than to take a visitor round his yard. Down in the cellar you will see the wine being pressed, and may drink the pure juice as it runs out fresh and sweet from the bottom of the vat; or may watch the last drops of liquid wrung from the vine stalks and skins—the *vinaccio*, as it is called—which remain when the wine has been drawn off, and from which they manufacture spirits. Above the cellars are the corn-lofts, carpeted with yellow maize, and next door the joiner's shop; then come the ox stable, the horse stable, the byres and the *filanda*. "A useful charity," the count calls this latter, as he walks his guest down the long rows of women, sitting each in front of her trough of hot water, in which the golden silk cocoons are dancing about.

The count will delight to take you round his farms, and show off the steading for which he won the government prize, or the vines that make the wine you have bought. There is a small hill, or rising ground, about two miles off, beautifully wooded, with natural oak coppice and rock breaking out now and again. This is the apple of the count's eye. It is about one hundred and fifty acres in extent, and he has enclosed it all within a stone wall, built gates that are always carefully locked and chained, and driven roads through it in all directions. Part of

the rough hillside he has taken into his vineyard ; part he has left in its natural wild beauty.

Up at the contadino's house, on the brow of the hill, the view is superb ; the Alps on one side, the great Venetian plain upon the other. You may wonder why the count does not live up here ; but he will tell you that the noise and bustle of the little market-place are essential to him ; here he would die. Meantime, the groom has been sent to fetch the contadino, who is to catch it for leaving a gate unlocked. By the time he arrives, the count is ready to start ; and away he goes, trotting down hill, the peasant with bare feet and bare-headed trotting alongside, trying in vain to defend himself from the torrent that is falling on his head. You imagine the count in a rage, so quick and fierce is his manner and tone ; but in the eye nearest his guest there lurks a twinkle, and he lays his hand on your knee to show that his bark is worse than his bite. The row goes on till the contadino drops behind in sheer breathlessness, and the last we see of him is standing in the middle of the road, three quarters laughing and one quarter in tears.

The count whisks back to his palace. Off come the boots once more. The carriage is washed for the third time that day. Up into the study ; down with the ledgers ; in come the secretary and *fattore* ; and they are all deep in addition, the count running two fingers up the column, and talking incessantly to

himself. If the secretary ventures a word, "Tasi!" cries the count. Then with a loud "Finito!" the ledger is shut-to and thrust into its place. The secretary retires with a half-amused look, and the count leans back in his chair. If one wishes to flatter him, one says, "Un po d' affare," and he replies, "Oh! per carità! cosa vuole, caro signore? pazienza; qualche piccola cosa."

The count dines at twelve o'clock. As the hour approaches he shouts to his man, "In tavola?" and the answer comes back, "Siorsi." Up jumps the count and into the dining-room, a huge gaunt room, cold and bare. He walks to the table and begins ladling out the *minestra*. There is a scrabbling noise upon the upper floor, a rush and roar upon the stairs, loud voices and laughter, and in tumble the countess and her niece. They give one the feeling of having been locked up all the morning, and only let out to feed. The ladies do all the talking, till the count's birds begin to sing in his study, when they are pulled up short by a brief "Tasi, cara!" from the count, and they have to sit still and listen.

CASTELFRANCO

CASTELFRANCO, as its name implies, was a castle before it became a town. It lies in the middle of the Venetian plain, about twelve miles west of Treviso, and fifteen miles north of Padua. The castle was built in the year 1199, by the Trevisans, as an outpost against their neighbours of Padua, and also as a curb upon the powerful family of Camposampiero. The castle is a large square, with high brick walls and four towers at the four corners, and three gateways, battlemented and grooved for portcullises. The colony of Trevisans who first settled there lived entirely inside the castle, and pledged themselves to maintain two hundred horse for the defence of the frontier. In return for this service they were exempt from certain taxes, and therefore called their dwelling Free Castle. The fighting days of Castelfranco came to an end in 1329, when the city passed into the possession of Venice; and its peace remained unbroken till the wars of the League of Cambray, when the Emperor Maximilian ordered the destruction of the town. Castelfranco was saved from this doom by the eloquence of one of its citizens.

Modern Castelfranco has burst through its ancient walls; they are fallen and ruinous in many places. The old city stands like a square fortalice in the middle of a large piazza which surrounds it. Inside the walls the city is dead and silent; it seems as if none but ghosts inhabit there. Outside, in the square, there is all the bustle and rattle of a market-place; farmers whisking about in their light country carts; heavy cattle plodding stupidly along and thrusting their big bodies under the horses' heads; hawkers crying their wares. The castle is separated from the market-place by a moat, and on the further side green banks, planted with fir trees, slope up from the water to the walls. On the still surface of the moat, the white crests of the distant Alps are reflected; their outline unbroken by a single ripple. Almost all the houses of the newer town have once been frescoed; and the crumbling plaster still retains some patches of brilliant colour; here a wreath of fruit and flowers, there the muscular form of Hercules raising Antæus from the earth.

To escape from the noise and bustle of the market-place, one has only to pass under the old gateway, where St. Mark's lion still keeps guard, and Pietro Gradenigo's inscription testifies to Venetian rule. Inside, all is quiet, as in some Oxford college garden. The walls are hung with a deep mantle of ivy, and terraced vineyards and banks of grass run up to the foundations of the corner towers. At one angle

a large stone pine shows its rounded head, dark green against the dull red brick. The old town is so small that from one gate you can look through the other out to the vista of country beyond.

Castelfranco possesses one famous citizen. It claims to be the birthplace of Giorgione. And whether that great painter was born there, or at Vedelago hard by, it is certain that he called himself "Zorzon del Castelfranco." The town has raised a statue to his honour. It stands outside the walls, at an angle of the moat; a handsome lad, in doublet and hose, with collar thrown open and masses of hair falling over his shoulders; he holds a pencil in one hand, and a sketching-block in the other. At his feet is the quiet water, and, for a background, the green banks and broken wall. It seems fitting that this florid youth should have been the earliest master of the gorgeous epoch in the history of Venetian art; and Castelfranco is justly proud of him. Though critical investigation has steadily reduced the number of genuine pictures by Giorgione, yet one undoubted work by him still hangs in the cathedral of his native town—a beautiful picture in spite of the retouchings from which it has suffered. It is a votive piece, and was ordered by a certain Tuzio Costanzi, whose arms appear on the canvas, in memory of his son Matteo, a young *condottiere* who died at Ravenna; and the saint in armour, San Liberale, who stands at the foot of the Madonna's throne, refers to the profession of

arms which Matteo followed. It is not improbable that the model for this splendid young warrior was Giorgione himself, and beyond all doubt the little study in the National Gallery is a sketch made for this picture. There are the same large brown hands; the same elaborate armour and undercoat of mail, painted link by link. But the landscape which appears over the crimson-draped wall and behind the Madonna's throne, is as lovely as anything in the picture. Trees, hills, lawns, and lake lie peaceful in the dewy air; the atmosphere has the softness, freshness, and lucidity of a spring morning on the Lombard plains. One almost hears the birds beginning their song. There is nothing of Venice in the scene, nor anything of the Venetian manner in the work; no shimmering of light and colour as in Tintoretto's pictures; all the landscape and the figures are solid and clear, yet wonderfully airy. The whole comes nearer to the manner of Boccaccino da Cremona than to that of any Venetian painter. It is the picture of the dayspring on the plain of Italy, painted with the passion of a man who loved the country. If this be Giorgione's work, it is hard to believe that the same hand painted "The Concert" in the Pitti Palace at Florence. There is no trace of spiritual commotion in this picture; it is calm and happy, the work of a young man whose art and whose love as yet go hand in hand, whose mistresses have not yet demanded a choice. The beautiful

Madonna is the portrait of that Cecilia whose name he scribbled on the back of the canvas by way of signature—

“Cara Cecilia
Vieni, t'affretta !
Il tuo t'aspetta, Giorgio.”

After the Giorgione and the old walls there is not much else to see in Castelfranco. It was a cold, still, frosty evening as we drove to Bassano. Every branch and twig upon the trees stood out in sharp relief, etched in black upon the after-light of a winter sunset. The ditches by the roadside were frozen hard, and the children were tobogganing upon them as best they could without the help of a hill. The pale yellow glow lingered on into the night, and the cold wind blew keener as we drew near the mountains. At the crossing of two roads, far away from any house, a girl was hanging a lamp before a wayside shrine.

BASSANO

BASSANO lies at the mouth of one of the great gates of Italy, where the gorge of Valsugana opens upon the plain, and leaves a space between the torrent and its rocky walls just wide enough to admit the carriage road which leads to Trent and the Tyrol. Bassano was once an important place, thanks to its position on this main route between Italy and Germany; but now the railway takes the traveller round by Verona to Bozen, and there are few who make the beautiful journey from Bassano by Valsugana to Trent. Bassano is a lovely place, rich in the features of the Italian Alps. The mountains rise close behind the town; wooded at their base, but clothed in sweeps of pasture on their upper heights, where the cloud shadows float, seeming to lose themselves in the gullies for a while, then streaming out again along the green hillside. These pastures are traversed by mountain paths that lead to small white houses, dotted like pilgrimage chapels among the Alps. From these highland paths there is an endless view over the Venetian plain, vast and

hazy and silent, reaching on and on to Venice and the sea. The town of Bassano stands upon rising ground, and the Brenta flows through the middle of the town; on either side are houses, perched high above the river, with gardens and balconies that overhang the water. Acacia trees sweep their showery sprays towards the torrent; and roses, in trails and tangles, droop from every wall—roses of every hue, deep red, dusky crimson, pale pink, or creamy white. Bassano is a perfect gulistan, a garden of roses whose perfume is scattered abroad by the current of air the foaming Brenta makes.

The name of Bassano recalls two famous families—the Ezzelini da Romano, cruel and terrible tyrants, whose bloodstained career was run and ended in the thirteenth century; and the family of Daponte, better known by their name of Bassano, painters every one of them for a whole century, father, son, four grandsons, nephews, and brothers-in-law. The Ezzelini were feudal lords of Romano, a small village about four miles north-east of Bassano. The site of their castle is marked by a tower, which is visible from Bassano and far across the plain. In face of the castle is a dark and gloomy ravine, worn by a torrent in the bare mountain-side, and filled with *débris*; a fitting nest for such a brood. The Ezzelini soon made themselves masters of neighbouring Bassano; and on the highest point of the town, nearest to the Alps, stands their keep, built to overawe the citizens.

The fortress, with its two red-brick towers, bastions, and flanking walls, is falling into ruin now ; and only a small corner of it still serves as the episcopal palace. Time has clothed its sternness and its strength in a clinging mantle of ivy, rich and luxuriantly deep, that curves and sways in every breath of wind. From this high burgh, or castle, walls sweep away, enclosing the town all round. Below, the country lies spread out in teeming cultivation ; fruit trees, olive groves, and vineyards ; white oxen ploughing the orchards ; the whole land rolling higher and higher up towards the Alps.

The Ezzelini have left their impress on the structure of Bassano, and the Daponte family their mark upon its walls. Many of the house fronts are covered with crumbling frescoes—scriptural subjects, or flowers and fruit—rich and warm in colour ; bright patches of red or yellow, and then blank spaces sadly showing the brick. In a few years more these frescoed fronts will have ceased to be, and half the colour will have gone out of Bassano. As far as one can judge them now in their mouldering condition, they never could have been of fine workmanship. The Dapontes and their pupils were accustomed to work rapidly, receiving orders for pictures and frescoes much in the same way as a modern furnisher receives orders for chairs and wall papers. Their scenes from country life, homely pastorals, or Bassanese interiors, glowing with pitchers of polished bronze, used to

fill the stalls at many a country fair. As for easel pictures, the whole company contented itself with reproducing the work of its most famous member, Jacopo Bassano; but the larger part of their goods were made to suit a peasant market; and some of their pictures may yet be found in *contadini's* or priests' houses on the North Venetian plain.

The country round Bassano is agricultural; and the *contadini*, here as everywhere, are deeply superstitious. Every *fiesta* of the Church is religiously observed, and the whole population of the district is to be met with on such occasions; some strolling idly on the long white roads, others playing ball in the square places before the churches. The girls have their hair rolled back, bright-coloured handkerchiefs on their heads, and most beautiful pear-shaped earrings of gold filigree work in their ears. These earrings are a speciality of Bassano and its neighbourhood; the shops are full of them, and a girl will be sure to get a pair from the peasant lad who is courting her. Side by side with the obvious respect for the Catholic Calendar, there exists the remnant of an older pagan worship, quite recognisable under its modern Roman guise. In many trees, and especially at the corners of the roads, little wooden shrines, with the image of a saint or the Madonna, are nailed among the branches; and every *fiesta* fresh flowers are placed in a tumbler before the shrine, and ribbons are twined about it. The custom is a survival of tree-worship,

but it has lost all its ominous significance of human sacrifice ; there is nothing now but what is sweet and innocent in these tree shrines ; the ribbons are no longer sacrificial fillets ; and the odour of flowers has taken the place of blood.

MAROSTICA AND SCHIO

FROM Bassano to Schio there is a charming walk of about fifteen miles, along the foot of the Alps. The road leaves the town to the east, and crosses the Brenta by the quaint old wooden bridge, roofed and buttressed like the old bridge at Reichenau in Switzerland; it then skirts the mountains, winding its way among the last spurs and undulations that subside into the plain; dipping here into a valley with a torrent that makes all the air musical; there climbing a slight ascent where the vines grow best, turning their clusters to the sun. The road passes several villages occupied by a peasant population—a people who look as if they had been so long and intimately acquainted with the earth that they had absorbed some of its acquiescence and had accepted the justice of its seasons; the young men strong and free, the elders calm and cheerful.

Among these villages there is one, Marostica, a perfect gem, beautiful and complete. It stands now, just as it has stood for the last five centuries; a relic of that period when the small feudal lords endeavoured to master their neighbouring communes,

and when each little township sought to be independent and self-sustaining. One comes upon Marostica rather by surprise, round a bend of the road. It lies nestled into a fold of the hills; all its walls and battlements are perfect; its gates and towers untouched. The place is built in a square, like Castelfranco and other walled villages of the Venetian plain. From its northern end walls are flung out, and run up the steep hillside against which Marostica leans. They pass along the upper crest of the hill and enclose a large space of garden land, which was intended to supply the town in case of siege, while these outlying walls rendered it impregnable from above. There is not a single house beyond the gates; for Marostica has not broken through its ancient walls, as is the case with Castelfranco, but is as completely fortified as ever it was five hundred years ago.

Passing under the archway, with its portcullis slide, the street leads presently to the piazza. At one end stands an old castle surrounded by a moat, dry and filled with grass-grown earth. This castle, or Palazzo Pubblico, is not unlike the great feudal keep of Ferrara, in miniature. St. Mark's lion is carved grimly *gardant* above the entrance; and in front on the piazza are the inevitable stone sockets for the Venetian masts, which are found in every city that has known Venetian rule. The colour of the castle fills the eye, and gives point to the piazza; it



THE WAILS OF MAROSTICA

is the most striking thing about Marostica. The whole square mass is painted in the key of red, but red of four or five different hues, toning away from crimson to purple where the paint and plaster are most ancient and weather-stained. Indeed, both for structure and for colour, the castle of Marostica is one of the most surprising buildings to be found in Venetian territory. But Marostica has yet another attraction besides its native beauty and its Palazzo Pubblico: it possesses an excellent wine. The vintage of the hill-slopes is the best to be found in the Veneto, and that of Marostica, at the moderate price of fifty centesimi a litre, has a piquant flavour that is all its own.

After leaving Marostica the road continues for ten miles along the hillside till it reaches Thiene with its castle, now belonging to the Counts Colleoni. Thence the road turns due north, and makes towards Schio through a valley that narrows slowly as it nears the Alps. Schio is a lovely place, lying embraced by the mountains, just where two gorges open upon the plain, and the road from Roveredo enters on Italy. The twin-peaked Monte Summano divides the gorges from one another. The base of the mountains is wooded with chestnut, but, above, they spring up into bare dolomite-looking peaks, cold and grey like the rocks behind Mentone. The air is fresh and pure, and there is abundance of water everywhere bursting out of the limestone strata. Schio possesses a double

interest; one historical and antiquarian, the other social and modern. The town claims to have been the original fief of the great family of Scaligers, who were lords of Verona and all the eastern plain between 1282 and 1338, till the rising power of Venice checked and broke their might. This claim is more than doubtful; but there can be no doubt that from this little mountain village came the blessed John of Schio, a thirteenth-century Savonarola whose influence was supreme, for a while, in Padua, Vicenza, and their districts. His end was hardly more fortunate than that of the more famous Florentine. His followers deserted him; he was crushed by the Ezzelini of Romano, and compelled to fly before their tyranny. Modern Schio remembers neither the Beato nor the Scaligers, nor shows a trace of either. It is now the seat of the largest woollen factories in the kingdom, the first enterprise of their kind undertaken in United Italy. Schio is given over to wool. The mills, the houses of the mill hands, and the palaces of the proprietors occupy the whole place.

This great industry was founded by the Rossi family. As other mills sprang up and entered into competition, the various proprietors believed it to their advantage to unite. They formed one large company, of which the Senator Rossi was the director and the moving spirit. The people lead a quasi-communistic life, and the business is conducted on advanced principles. One cannot help being struck

by the comfort and content of the population, their cheerful looks, their *esprit de corps*, their pride in Schio, and their evident sense of being properly based in the world. The mills themselves stand in large garden-like grounds, with plenty of space on all sides, and are kept in perfect order and cleanliness. The mills employ about five thousand hands; and any one who enters the business is made to feel that he is an integral part of the concern, and, indirectly, he shares in the profits. A baby born of two mill hands is taken away almost at once to the nursing-house, a large building standing in a garden by itself, where a supply of nurses is always ready, as well as a doctor and other appliances for rearing children. The baby stays in the nursery till it is four or five years old, while the mother returns to her work. From the age of five till seven, the child plays in the *crèche*; and from seven until it is old enough to enter the mills, it goes to the mill school, where, in addition to the government curriculum, it learns the craft of weaving. Besides being thus relieved of the burden of a family, there are other advantages which the hands enjoy. There are a pensioners' fund and houses for those who are past work; baths, a band of music trained from among the hands, a theatre, a company of actors, dancing-rooms and gardens, all maintained by the director out of the profits of the business.

The company have laid out a town of new houses,

each with a plot of land attached, large in proportion to the size of the house. These houses vary in price from eighty to four hundred pounds ; and any hand may become the actual proprietor of one by paying the value and an interest of four per cent. in annual instalments, which run from ten to fifteen years, or such term as may be agreed upon. This yearly sum is deducted from the workman's wages. The system is evidently popular, for every house is occupied and the director is ready to build more.

The name of Rossi is of magical power in Schio ; and not only in Schio but elsewhere in Italy. The senator was the founder of a group of economists who hold pronounced views on the labour question and the workman's right to a share of the profits. At Schio he was "the lord and owner" of the place. He restored the cathedral ; altered the piazza and the main street ; built a new church ; raised a statue of the ideal weaver in the middle of the new town ; left little of ancient Schio remaining. But a visit to the village is full of interest, partly for the sake of its natural beauty, and partly because of the social experiment which is in operation there.

SAN GIORGIO IN VALPOLICELLA

ABOUT ten miles north-west of Verona lies the famous Valpolicella, famous to all lovers of the Veneto as the home of its finest wine. You can reach the district by carriage or by train from Verona. Valpolicella is a conch of low hills curving away from the Adige at Parona, and touching it again at Sant' Ambrogio. The exposure is south-west, and the country is sheltered from all northern or eastern winds by the higher crests of Monte Lessini and Monte Baldo. A veritable sun-trap, with sun-warmed soil and gently-drained declivities, the little hills are rich in vines and olive and orchard. The thriving villages, Negrar, Fumane, St. Pietro Incariano, and Sant' Ambrogio, are named in the guide-books, and may be found on most maps. But the real glory of Valpolicella, the gem in the coronet set above the banks of the Adige, San Giorgio in Valpolicella, you will find in neither guide nor map, unless it be the military survey. San Giorgio sits perched on a high hill-slope; it is the highest of the villages in Valpolicella, and you can see it from the train just by Somma Campagna, on the Verona-Milan line. It lies so high, yet looks

so near, that it has received the nickname of "inganna poltron," or "dish the dawdler," and, indeed, from the station of Gargagnago, on the Verona-Caprino tram-line, there is a considerable pull uphill till you reach San Giorgio. But it is well worth the toil. The carriage road winds in gentle curves round the south-west side of the hill, but there is a footpath leading up a little valley by the side of a stream, which takes you there quicker. As you rise the plain opens out below you, the Adige cutting the rich loam land as it issues from its narrow gorge by Rivoli, and the distant towers of Custozza and Solferino, sharply defined against the western sky, marking those famous battle-fields. The village is a village of stone-cutters, and as you near it you catch the tinkling chip, chip, chip of iron chisels on the resonant marble. This sound, indeed, is the dominant sound in the village; you hear it wherever you go. From the little town itself you command a network of intricate ravines running up into the roots of Monte Lessini; to the west are the rapid slopes of Monte Baldo, then the stretch of Garda, from Salò round by Desenzano, to the island promontory of Sirmione; further south the vast plain of Lombardy and, on a clear day, the faintest suggestion of the Apennines. A dominant view and delicious air, for the mists of the plain seldom rise to San Giorgio, and this, in part, accounts for the excellence of the wine. The soil all round is a rich red; it is made from the detritus of the famous Verona marble,

brocatello di Verona, a breccia which varies in hue from peach-pink to apricot, and is one of the dominant factors in the decoration of church and palace throughout the Veneto. The marble quarries are hard by, a gash of deeper red on the hillside across the ravine, an easy walk from San Giorgio, and there you may see the two kinds this mountain-side can yield—the pale creamy marble; not unlike Istrian stone, and the richer and more varied *brocatello*. Wine and marble are the two great products of Valpolicella, and it is remarkable how often one meets fine stone and fine wine in excellent conjunction; to match the *reciotto* and *brocatello* of Valpolicella, we have the *refosco* and Istrian stone of Orsera, the great quarries of Marino and the wine of the Castelli Romani. *Reciotto* is made from the pick of the gathering, the small bunches with the finest berries. These are carefully and separately laid out for ten or fifteen days on straw matting, and turned now and again so that the berries shall not be bruised by the weight of the cluster. The wine pressed from these grapes, in the first stage of becoming raisins, is, of course, sweet and full-bodied. Its colour is splendid, a dark ruby, with a touch of blue; there is a nutty after-flavour when the sweetness has passed from the palate. The wine effervesces naturally, and throws up a beautiful pink foam. Not everyone appreciates it, but it is a *vin sincero*, *unschuldig*, and highly esteemed in its native land, where it had best be drunk. Of course,

there is plenty of other wine made in Valpolicella, all with the same excellent aromatic quality of flavour, drier, lighter, less luscious than *reciotto*. The wine is made in autumn, but the great selling time is about the beginning of the year. Then the village is all agog with the business. The flow of the crimson flood from the great bins is a glorious feast of colour—the crimson of a Titian or a Tintoret—while if, as well may happen, snow be lying on the ground, the blood-red splashes on the dazzling white make a contrast that is almost blatant. At Epiphany a strange and beautiful spectacle may be watched from San Giorgio's height. About half-past six in the evening, looking out across the lower valleys and the plain, you will see here and there, on the crests of the hills and in the hollows between them, little fires flaming suddenly up into the misty air, then dying down again as suddenly as they came, leaving behind them only a dull red glow on the surrounding haze. On a clear night they say you may count two hundred fires. One village vies with another as to who shall make the "brawest bleeze." A beautiful sight, though it lasts but a short time.

But San Giorgio has another claim on the attention—the church of St. George, the earliest existing Lombard church in Italy, a monument of the highest importance in the history of architecture. Among the few remaining churches of what Rivoira calls the pre-Lombard period, the period of their great King



SAN GIORGIO IN VALPOLICELLA

Luitprand, in the first half of the eighth century, San Giorgio is the sole example to which we can ascribe a certain date. Santa Maria delle Caccie at Pavia, San Salvatore at Brescia, Santa Teuteria at Verona, San Pietro at Toscanella, Santa Maria in Valle at Cividale, and the parish church of Arliano, near Lucca, though their dates may be approximately guessed, give us no certain ground for fixing them. But in the museum at Verona we have two little columns which formed part of the ciborium of San Giorgio and bear a rudely-cut inscription. The essential part of the inscription declares that this ciborium was made by Master Ursus and his pupils, Juvinterius and Juvianus, when Luitprand was reigning and the venerable Father Dominic was bishop. Luitprand came to the throne in the year of Bishop Dominic's death, which establishes the date as 712. The ciborium was made for the church of St. George, and certainly not before the church was built; and thus we get 712 as the latest possible date for the building, and establish the seniority of San Giorgio among all the Lombard churches of Italy. The church, as it at present stands, is about one hundred feet long. Its eastern end has three apses, and the nave and aisles are divided, first by five pilasters, and then, towards the presbytery, by three columns. The peculiarity of the west end is that it has a single apse through which the main door is pierced. This striking feature led Signor

Cattaneo to conjecture that the church as it stands belongs to two periods—the eighth and the tenth centuries. We have a fixed date for the original church—712. The triple-apsed east end is never found in churches of that date, therefore Cattaneo concludes that the apse of the west end was the choir apse of the original church, built at a time when the Lombards were still Arian, and adopted the western, not the eastern, position for their altar. The present east end, with its three apses and the nave as far as the columns extend, form a later addition. The beautiful campanile belongs to the twelfth century; so, too, the exquisite little cloister, a gem of later Lombard style, with alternate single and double columns at its eastern angle. The carving is rude on the capitals, figures of beasts and of birds; but the grouping of the columns, seen from any angle of the cortile, is most effective. In the cloister near the door leading into the church stands the rest of the ciborium that fixes the date. The rough decoration of crosses and patera has been cut by a blunt triangle-chisel. As the church and cloister are now a national monument, it may be hoped that some day the horrible modern vaulting will be cleared out of the church and the ciborium put together again and restored to its proper place upon the high altar.

THE EUGANEAN HILLS

NEXT to the Alps, and perhaps even more striking than they, the most important feature in the distant view from the lagoons is that singular group of cones that stand up towards the west beyond Padua, the Euganean Hills. They are about thirty miles away from the lagoon shore, yet on a still day from the level of the water, by some trick of mirage, it looks as though the lagoon ran right up into their roots. In summer the dark cones make a sharp silhouette against the golden light of sunset, and in winter the sun goes down just in a nick in the hills. A strange, attractive land, inviting one to explore, yet seldom visited. The great main roads skirt the group to east and west ; and the train from Padua to Bologna just skims its eastern edge at the stations of Monte Grotto, Battaglia, Monselice.

The Euganeans are an isolated group of volcanic cones, thrust through the alluvial soil of the plain by some portentous upheaval. The hills are of no great height—Venda, the highest, is only one thousand eight hundred feet above the sea ; nor does the group cover a large tract of ground. But their sharp slope, their

abrupt upspringing from the plain, the intricate network of valleys, the smoking springs of Abano (hot enough to boil an egg!), the macquis on their shoulders, and the varied flora, all combine to make them singularly attractive. The Euganean group has always been a land of strange happenings: the rumour of their volcanic origin lives on in the myth of Phaeton hurled into the Po hard by, the tears of his sisters, the Heliades, turned to amber, and they themselves to poplars by the river bank; Geryon, the oracular, dwelt here at Monte Grotto; the original race that peopled the hills and valleys, the Euganei, are still a crux to ethnographers; that great magician of the Middle Ages, Pietro d' Abano, was born at their feet; and it was only the middle of the last century that saw brigandage stamped out by the drum-head justice of the military governor. Even now in some of the cottages you may see, leaning in a kitchen corner, an enormous heavy flint-lock gun, with a huge trumpet-shaped mouth — the *trombetta*, without which no brigand took to the hills.

But now the country is quiet enough, and excellent roads lead into it; the little villages are favourite jaunting places for the people from Padua. A splendid avenue, lined with fine plane trees, leaves the Porta San Giovanni, and brings you, after about nine miles, to the first of the isolated cones that form the outworks of the Euganean group, Monte Rosso. Between this hill and Monte Lonzina lies the great Benedictine

monastery of Praglia. As you turn out of the main road sharp to the left, in front of you rises a vast grey building, completely blocking the way. The church is on the left, and is reached by a broad flight of steps. It was designed by Tullio Lombardo, though the incorrect façade might raise a doubt. Inside, however, such doubts vanish. It is a noble building, harmonious in proportions, quiet, almost severe, in the authentic manner of the great master. Little now remains of its ancient adornments; most has been pillaged, swept away to the museum at Padua, or the antiquity shops of Venice; two pictures by Varottari, a master who felt what Mr. Berenson aptly calls "the tonic value of the nude," is all that survives. In one of them is a glowing head of a young saint that makes one long to take him out of that cold place; and I daresay it might be done for some few lire. The monastery buildings are very fine: spacious cloisters, a hanging cortile, surrounded by a double ambulatory, outside for summer, inside for winter, vast refectory and library, lavabos in Istrian stone, with a handsome pattern of intarsia work in lead. But all has been desecrated, devastated by regiment after regiment of soldiery, who used the place as barracks. A small part has now been restored to the monks, who are making pathetically inadequate efforts to clean the cells, to obliterate *grafitti*, to refit the windows, to wrestle with the rude destruction wrought by the military. The hill-slopes above the

abbey still bear signs of the careful cultivation by the monks, and in the deserted gardens are the remains of the great fish stews. But the air is chilly-damp round Praglia; the grey walls are stained with mildew; decay has laid a clammy hand upon the place; it is doomed never to rise again.

Soon after leaving Praglia the road begins to rise, and instantly comes relief. The air grows dry and soft; the slopes of the hillside up which one winds are richly cultivated in vines, that russet-golden grape that makes the wine for which these hills are famous. On the left you have the slopes of Venda across an intervening valley, and straight in front of you the basalt cliffs of Pendice, crags at least five hundred feet in height and crowned by the ruins of a castle. Teolo, bright sunny Teolo, lies on the top of the crest that marks the main ridge of the Euganeans; you can look westward over the Mantovano, or eastward over the Paduan plain; while towering above you are the rocks of Pendice, famous for the story of la Speronella, that has taken a firm root in the neighbourhood. When the Emperor, Frederic I., was reigning, about the year 1150, Count Pagano was his Vicar in Padua. He saw and loved the beautiful Speronella Dalcomanino, wife of Giacobino da Carrara, and being Imperial Vicar and a haughty man, he carried her off to his rock-perched fortress at Pendice. Whether the lady minded or not is doubtful: her subsequent conduct would lead us to

think she did not. But the nobles of the Padovano could not brook the insult. They rose against Pagano, who fled for shelter to Pendice, where he was besieged and eventually surrendered both the rock and his mistress. To celebrate their triumph, the Paduans established a festival in the middle of June, when all the people, decked with flowers and fruit, went singing down to the river banks. (*"Cum floribus et prelegiis ad flumina cantantes incedunt."*) The Speronella, however, did not choose to remain husbandless; she first of all married Messer Traversario, who was quickly followed by Messer Pietro da Zaussano, to whom succeeded Ezzelin the Second, Lord of Romano. He one day left his grim fortress of Romano, hard by Bassano, to visit the handsome young Olderico da Fontana, at the pleasant town of Monselice, in the Euganean Hills. He was royally treated, and, among other diversions, host and guest had a bathe together in the hot springs of Battaglia. Ezzelin was much impressed by what he saw, and on his return home incautiously enlarged on Olderico's charms in the presence of the inflammable Speronella, who soon made up her mind. She wrote to Olderico, made an appointment with him, left Romano and met and married Olderico, her sixth husband. They are still proud of her at Teolo, though they also want to claim Livy as one of them, declaring that Teolo is, in fact, Titus Livius condensed.

From Teolo you can reach Rovolon, either over the shoulder of the Monte Grande, or by skirting the conical Madonna del Monte, the most northern of the Euganean group. Rovolon lies high up on the hillside; behind it the Madonna del Monte is all a dense green mantle of close-growing, stunted beech, used for charcoal. To the north you look across the plain, past that curious isolated clump of mounds at Montegalda, to the Monte Berici which hide Vicenza, and the great line of the Alps cut by the gorge that lets the Brenta through at Bassano. Rovolon recalls the memory of a famous Englishman, Cardinal Pole, who spent some pleasant days in "our paradise, as I may truly call this place, both because of its charming situation amid these delicious hills, and also and much more because of the friends whose society I enjoy here."

The best way to explore the southern part of the Euganeans is to take the train to Battaglia and a carriage thence into the hills. Venda, the highest point, may be reached from Galzignano and the Camaldolese monastery of Rua, which stands upon its eastern shoulder. Like the Madonna del Monte, Venda is covered with a thick undergrowth of dwarf beech, through which the narrow path winds up to the crest. As you emerge from the thicket the splendour and interest of the Euganeans' position is borne in upon you. On all sides you dominate the vast Lombardo-Venetian plain; there are no hills

nearer than the Alps. Far away to the east, if it be a fine day, you may catch a glint of sunshine on the lagoon, and smoke on the extreme horizon marks where Venice lies. Shelley thought he could see her—

“Column, tower and dome and spire
Shine like obelisks of fire.”

That was merely his poetic vision, though Venice was there in spirit and dominates the plain. It was on Venda's crest, however, that he wrote those beautiful “lines among the Euganean Hills,” which have caught the sweep of that majestic view from “olive sandalled Apennine” in the south to “the Alps whose snows are spread high between the clouds and sun,” and rendered the sense of silence, solitude, and brooding that envelops one on a hot autumn afternoon. On the very summit of Venda are the ruins of a monastery that once belonged to the Olivetan Order of Benedictines, doubtless Shelley's “hoary tower, in the windless air”—a place for long mid-summer dreamings.

From Venda a rough path leads due south along the top of the ridge to Val San Zibio. The richness of the Euganean flora may be tested here; among the commoner and more obvious flowers you will find cyclamen and dog-tooth violet, and above all the bastard dittany, the fraxinella of the fragrant leaves and phosphorescent glow at night-time—a plant

whose perfume most will relish now, though Gerard, in his *Herball*, says "it stinketh."

Val San Zibio, with its beautiful garden, lies nuzzled in a fold of the hills. As you descend upon it from the ridge first comes rough coppice, then ordered avenues of cypress trees and, when the little valley opens out, the formal garden with its pleached alleys of hornbeam, its stairs and terraces and fountains, its artificial pond with thick banks of St. John's wort, and a little rabbit-warren on an island in the middle. The villa itself is nothing, if the present house is all there was. It belonged first to the Barbarigos, and their coat is displayed on the handsome gateway leading to the garden; from Barbarigos it passed to Martinengos, and is now owned by Donà dalle Rose. But if the villa is of no account, the garden is a perfect joy, so richly and graciously set into the folding lap of the Euganean Hills. The village is a mere pretence. A few straggling cottages and one rough inn with a large courtyard, where the Paduans and Venetians come for their outings, to romp through the garden and get themselves drenched by the surprise jets of water that are thrown up at bench, and terrace, and stair; then to lunch at length under the courtyard pergola, and finish all with a game of bowls. I slept there once, and could not sleep for the noise of silkworms munching the mulberry leaves on the wooden shelves with which bedroom, corridor, and passages were filled. And when garden, wine, and *boccie* are



PETRARCH'S TOMB

over you may take your way by a woodland drive to the true shrine of these Euganean Hills, Arquà—Arquà di Petrarca.

“They keep his bones in Arqua where he died.”

In a veritable sun-trap lies the little town of Arquà. The hills all round are red and sunbaked, even where the carefully-terraced vineyards go. There is an upper and a lower town. In the upper is Petrarch's House, a quiet little hermitage, looking south-west over the plain; well preserved, a national monument. A large kitchen down below; five or six rooms on the upper floor rudely frescoed; Petrarch's cat, mummied, in a case above the door that leads to his study where he died; an avenue of laurel bushes in the garden. Down in the lower town is his tomb; a fine though plain sarcophagus put up for him by his son-in-law and heir, Francesco da Brossano. He died in 1374, in July, when the great summer sun must have been pouring his ocean of heat over the hills. They bore him down from the house on the hill-top, by the steeply-winding path, under vine and fig tree. Francesco Carrara, the great Lord of Padua, was present, with the bishop and clergy, and all the University. Sixteen doctors carried the coffin, covered by a pall of cloth-of-gold, under a baldachino lined with ermine. The body lay in a chapel built by the poet himself till his heir erected the quiet and stately tomb that stands now by the

northern door of the church under the shadow of a cypress tree. The return from Arquà is easy. A short drive brings you to Monselice with its hill and its castle and flanking walls rapidly disappearing before the inroads of the quarry works; and there you are on the main line from Venice to Bologna.

SAN MARTINO DI CASTROZZA

I DO not know whether many of the Venetian people have penetrated as far as San Martino di Castrozza, nor what impression such a mountain glen would leave upon their sea-accustomed minds. But some have thought of such a journey and made inquiries about it; and, by the help of the new road, it is possible that they may one day surprise the silence with their presence and their song. And in visiting San Martino and its valley, they would be visiting a place which once belonged to their native city; for the quaint old Gothic palace of the Captain at Primiero still shows upon its crumbling walls the arms of Dolfin, Capello, and other Venetian noblemen, sent there to govern the district in the name of the Republic.

San Martino lies at the upper end of the valley of Primiero, in the heart of a grand Dolomite region. It may be reached from Feltre on the Italian side, for the new road between Primiero and Fonzaso is now finished. San Martino is not a village. It consists of an old hospice, the priest's house, and the modern inn, all joined together and forming two sides

of a square. I am told that the place has changed considerably, and there are now several hotels. The inn looks due south, right down the valley towards Primiero and the long and delicate line of Monte Pavione which shuts out Feltre and the Venetian plain; so there is breathing-space in front and a quiet horizon line to rest the eye upon. Immediately behind this cluster of buildings stands the tiny church, with its campanile and long sloping roof turned to the north and the snowy quarter; around the entrance is a faded fresco of St. Martin dividing his cloak among beggars. The whole forms a picturesque group of houses in the middle of a wide green slope of meadow land. Indeed, most points of view about San Martino are well composed. There are pictures, ready made to the painter's brush, at every turn and in endless variety. Here, through a vista of pines, a Dolomite peak rises erect into the blue, "bold, beautiful, and buoyant." Or here again, with a sudden surprise, at some turn in the valley, one comes upon a grassy hollow bordered with pines and an undergrowth of alder, bilberry, heath, and Alpine rose. The wind never reaches here, for the pine stems are tall and straight, and the branches feather down from the tree-tops in perfect pyramidal order. A stream runs through the middle of the glade, fresh and clear, and settling into pools as though it had time to enjoy life, not fouled with snow and hurried in headlong course like so

many Swiss rivers. The great mountains are shut out of sight, and one is carried away to some Highland burn, or to an English park in Derbyshire.

The head of the Primiero valley is broken up into many smaller valleys, full of wood, of water, and of birds. The cuckoo, even, has found his way to this surprising height of 4,600 feet, and sings his spring song at the end of June. The vegetation has all the richness and the perfume of the south, together with the brilliant colour of the Alps. The meadows around the inn are a mass of flame-coloured lilies and white liliago; pale blue clematis winds up the branches of the young fir trees; Alpine rose and gentians, saxifrage and daphne, columbine and the golden-globed king-cup grow side by side. There are endless mossy nooks for sitting in, sheltered from wind and sun; and endless walks in the pine forests, where the warm air is heavy with the perfume of fir needles and the pyrola. One lights upon woodcutters' cabins and the shanties of charcoal burners; and from high up the mountain-side comes the stroke of the axe and the crash of the falling pines. The great logs lie scattered through the forest, stripped of their bark and gleaming whitely in the twilight of greenery; through an opening in the trees there is a glimpse of the opposite crags, and an eagle poised upon their face; motionless, with outspread wings, he hovers for a moment in the air, then swoops and is lost among the pines of the ravine below him. The natives of these forests, the herds

and woodmen, are a kindly people, and strangers are rare enough as yet to awaken a certain curiosity and interest. "Where do you come from?" asks one. "From England." "And which direction is that?" "To the north there." "A long journey, is it not? and do you go uphill all the way?"

In the afternoon the clouds rise slowly over the range that shuts out Italy, and steal across the sky. They cling and wreath themselves around the peaks and precipices that flank the eastern side of the valley. Now they part for an instant to disclose a rocky needle shooting up into the air at a height where one would never have dreamed of looking for it; then again, as suddenly, comes a puff of wind, and the needle seems to withdraw into its sheath of billowy cloud. These rocks and precipices and pinnacles and buttresses are as fine as the more familiar Aiguilles at Chamonix. The snowy splendours of Mont Blanc are wanting here; but this row of giants, each with its own strong character, does not yield to the Dru or the Charmoz seen from the Monton Vert. The procession of peaks begins with the twin-crested Saas Maor (pronounced Mawr, as though it were in Wales); then comes the Cima di Ball, named after that distinguished member of the Alpine Club; then the Pala di San Martino, a cone of rosy rock rising from a glacier bed, the most beautiful of them all; then the Rosetta, whose pyramid point hangs right over the inn; and last, to crown the whole, the great

Cimon delle Palle, highest and most stupendous pinnacle of the range. Each of these airy promontories looks tempting to the climber; yet at first sight it would seem that no one could scale those cliffs. One of them, however, the Rosetta, is quite easy; a short three hours' climb from the inn. The way up the peak leads first through pine woods; then by pastures dotted with rude cowsheds, called in the dialect of the country *malghe*, milking-houses where one may find cream and cheese; then up a rocky funnel and into the very roots of these Dolomites, where they spring from a plateau of snow and ice. The Rosetta is well worth the trouble of climbing, both for the sake of the scenery on the way and for the view from the top; on the one side to the mountains of the Ampezzo Thal, Tofana, Pelmo, Cristallo, Antelao, Sorapiz, and on the other to the Ortler group; and the mountain seen from San Martino pays one the flattering compliment of always presenting its impossible front, its tremendous crags and impending crest. The one guide of the place, Michele by name, is a capital fellow, not a man though, but a chamois; with the wild eye and springing step of that mountain animal. He is a first-rate cragsman, and describes himself as *sicurissimo*; one hopes sincerely that he is so as one watches him leaping from rock to rock, or clinging to perilous ledges of cliff.

To the south, beyond Primiero hangs the long ridge of the Vette di Feltre, ending in its highest

point the pyramid of Monte Pavione, that looks on Italy and the Venetian plain. The top of Pavione, though quite an easy climb, is a long way from Primiero, and necessitates a start at midnight. This implies going early to bed. But sleep is no such easy matter in Primiero; the town itself is quiet enough, but every half-hour the silence is broken by a most weird and ghostly noise—"Urrr-r-r dieci ore, niente di nuovo" ("Ten o'clock, and nothing new"), "Urrr-r-r dieci e mezo, and nothing new." It is the watchman, or *salvador*, of Primiero, going his rounds, and calling the hours in a voice so strange and uncanny, that it reminds one of Hamlet's father on his ghostly beat at Elsinore.

The clock was striking twelve as Michele and I left Primiero. We passed the *salvador*, in his long grey cloak, standing at the village end—a solitary figure on the solitary road—and stepped away into the night. As long as we kept to the high-road we had the moon to light us—setting, it is true, yet loth to set, and gliding gently down the shoulder of Pavione; till, as we dipped deeper into the valley, the moon, too, dipped and disappeared, leaving at first a pale silver glow upon the hillside and then complete obscurity. The way led through two villages, Imer and Mezzano. At Mezzano all was absolutely silent; not a sound save our own footfalls. There had been a festival the day before, and the village streets were hung with flags and full of triumphal

arches that stood out grim and black in the night, and looked as though they were waiting for some ghostly band of revellers who would never come. At Imer the path to Pavione strikes across the torrent Cismone, and enters a forest of pine; and a deeper gloom, with here and there a glimmer of pale light through the pine stems, falls round us. Under this dim, mysterious twilight we toiled up the forest path. Now and then a bird, startled by our steps, would burst out of its roosting-place, and with heavy sleepy flight settle itself again in some more distant tree. Then the path surmounted the wood, and wound along the face of lofty limestone cliffs, supported occasionally upon galleries of pine logs driven into the sheer face of the rock. The cliffs gleamed high and ghostly white above; below the gulf looked black and ominously profound; the night wind blew fitfully, and the roar of the torrent beneath us rose and fell on the varying breeze. It is singular how the night destroys instinctive measurement of time—hours pass like minutes, minutes are expanded into hours, the feet perform their function mechanically, and the brain runs riot through the jungle of its own fancies. So we plodded on in silence up the cliffs, past a cataract whose jet of broken water looked like a stationary pillar of white in the obscurity. Then through long meadows that seemed interminably grey and long;—how cold and wan the flowers look at early morning on a mountain-side before the day-

light endows them with colour!—and above us shimmered the far white summit of Pavione, hung pale in the heaven. Then, after another forest belt, came the Malga d' Agnerola, where we were to wait till dawn should show us where to attack the last cliffs of the cone.

These *malghe* are solitary cowsheds and milking-huts with a cabin for the herds, perched high up on the loftiest mountain pastures; desolate stations, isolated from the world and the valley life that lies so far below them. As we approached this one all was silent; not a cattle-bell from the long byre, not a sound from the adjoining cabin. We pushed open the gate, and entered a sort of passage open at both ends. On one wall, high above the ground, hung a wooden bunk. The voice of the herd challenged us; what did we want at that hour? Had he any eggs? "No." "Might we light a fire?" "Yes; there was wood in the corner"; and the man turned to his sleep again. We went into the churning-room, a rough place with a hearth in the middle, two benches by the hearth, a huge churn in one corner. All the planks gaped; the wind blew freely through the room. We lit the fire, and the damp wood hissed, the cabin was soon full of smoke, the man in the bunk moved uneasily. Presently the door opened, and a tall gaunt man came silently in, peered round, and sat down by the fire. "Where were we going?" he asked; an Englishman, explained Michele, going up

Pavione. "I am going round the *malghe* with a barrel of brandy; I came up here yesterday." His manner was abstracted and melancholy; he stretched his gaunt hands out to the flame; the deep lines about his mouth moved curiously; his eyes were bent on the fire. The wind blew through the open rafters, sending the smoke about in swirls.

Presently, apropos of nothing, without raising his eyes, "A shepherd told me once," he began, "that a herd who worked on this *malga* left some of his things here when he went down for the winter. He came up for them later on, and as he was going home again in the middle of that forest among the snow he met a most lovely girl with long yellow hair. He fell in love with her, and asked her to marry him, and she said 'Yes,' on one condition, that he should never stroke her hair. He agreed, and they were married, and had two children. But one day he could not resist, and while she was asleep he stroked her long and beautiful hair. He did not keep his promise, you see," said the man with the brandy-barrel, and he drew his hand along as if he were stroking the hair. "Well, he went out to his work, but when he came back his wife was gone, and he never saw her again. Every day for a year, when he returned home he found the house tidied, the children dressed, and his dinner ready; but after a year that stopped, too, and his wife never came again, for she was a fay, you see." With that the gaunt man sighed

heavily, stretched his lean hands nearer to the flame, and the lines about the mouth seemed to deepen.

But now the dawn and wind together came stealing through the rafters. It was time to start again. We left the man with the barrel of brandy, sitting silent and bowed before the fire, and passed out into the keen morning wind. The few stars looked large and pale; and over the eastern peaks the light of the coming sun spread luminous.

There can hardly be a lovelier view than that from Pavione. To the north there shoot into the sky all the innumerable spires, turrets, buttresses, and pinnacles of the Dolomites; each mountain cut and faceted like a gem. Beyond these again, the snows of Adamello, Ortler, and the Wild Spitze hang like a huge ice wall upon the horizon. But it is not these, beautiful as they are, that give distinction to the view from Pavione; that lies in the wonderful contrast between north and south. Southward, over Feltre and its soft green hills, stretches the boundless plain of Italy, so vast and solemn, where the spirit of silence seems to spread its wings and brood. It lies mapped out below you; the Piave cutting the centre of the scene with its white ghiarra bed; a long and glittering snake that winds towards the sea; the Apennines from Piacenza to Bologna; the Styrian hills behind Trieste; the hills of Padua and Vicenza; while straight before you, clear yet far away, the Adriatic and the Adriatic's queen, Venice

asleep on her lagoon. The sweep of vision is so free, so unconfined the sense of space, that some feeling of awe and the spirit of silence steals up to one from that silent plain. As one lies and looks at it from the mountain crest, there is something indescribably fascinating and dominating in the stillness of this vast land ocean and the hills that circle it. What was it that the demon lover sang to his bride in the ballad?

“‘O haud your tongue, my sprightly flower ;
Let a’ your moaning be ;
I’ll show you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy.’
‘What hills are yon, yon pleasant hills
The sun shines sweetly on ?’
‘O yon are the hills of heaven,’ he said,
‘Where you will never win.’”

The memory of such a view as this can hardly fade, and Pavione will always be, in some especial sense, in the beauty of contrast and completeness, in the glamour of the vision from its summit, a poet’s mountain, the hill of the lover of Venice. For from its pyramid peak you grasp the sweep of lands that Venice owned once, and the beginning of that waterway which led her to a vaster empire still ; you dominate and seize the essential features of the Venetian landscape with all its width and delicate diversity of lines, the mountain-slope, the plain and the far sea, that sends its calling voice to you, through the haze and over the distance, summoning you to return.

IN ISTRIA

I. THE *BEPPI*

ON a clear day in March the faint blue outline of the Istrian coast, rather suggested than discerned from the campanile of Saint Mark, looked tempting enough to waken the spirit of spring wandering. Venice has always been intimately connected with the Istrian peninsula ; it was one of her earliest conquests. And though the custom-house now excludes the famous Istrian wine, Venice owes no small debt to Istria for the famous stone her artists used so well. The question was how to get there. The Austrian-Lloyd steamer, that lay off the point of the Dogana, did not look tempting ; and besides, that would take one to Trieste and not to the Istrian coast proper. A sailing-boat was clearly the right carriage. While revolving this point, an old friend of my friend Antonio, Paron Piero, the captain of the *Beppi*, offered us a berth—or, rather, half a berth apiece—on board his boat, that trades between Venice and the Istrian coast. We were to sail that same night at two o'clock with the ebbing tide.

Paron Piero was as tough and hearty an old salt as

you could meet with on the coast of Argyle. A Pelestrinotto by birth ; for hardly a single Venetian is engaged in this coasting trade, and the masters and crews all hail from Burano, Pelestrina, or Chioggia. Piero had served under Austria, and loved the name of emperor ; he insisted on announcing the birthday of the King of Italy, which we kept at sea, as “la nascita del nostro Imperador.” He had fought, been wounded, smuggled, and finally settled down to this trade of carrying wood. A man with a quick temper, a warm heart, and a flow of things to say that left him often high and dry for words, so that most of his sentences ended in “diavolo,” a compendious symbol for whatever might be wanting. The *Beppi* had cost him twenty-five thousand lire, and he had owned her fifteen years, though she confessed to a greater age with a tell-tale “1849,” half worn out, upon her bows.

The *Beppi* was a boat of that build which, in these waters, is called a *trabaccolo*—very similar to a Dutch galliot, with round, blunt bows, round ribs, and a flat bottom. She was about forty tons burthen ; and carried two square sails on her main and mizzen, and a jib. Her bulging prow had the two inevitable eyes cut and painted on either side of her nose ; for in Venice, as in China, they ask you, how can a vessel see where she is going if she has no eyes ? Inside, the *Beppi* contained a large hold in the centre for her cargo of firewood, and there an occasional cask of wine might be hidden from custom-house inquisitive-

ness. In the bows was a cabin for the crew ; and in the stern another for the *paron* and his son, which we were to share. The cabin of the *Beppi* was at most six feet square and five feet high. All round it was panelled in walnut-wood, roughly carved into arches and pilasters. At one side, close to the ladder of the hatchway, hung hams and smoked quarters of mutton, called *castradina*, and dried fish. Under these, three tubs, the one containing yellow maize-flour for *polenta*, another "paste," and the third peas and dried beans for soup. This, with a string of biscuits, formed the provision for the voyage. Next the hams came an array of hats and coats of all ages, to suit all weathers ; then a little table and a stool ; over the table the "Madonna della Seggiola." The opposite wall was entirely occupied by a large recess ; in the middle of this hung an engraving of a very Correggiesque Madonna, the patroness of the boat, surrounded with a wreath of olive branches, maize, and oranges. Before the picture a lamp in a glass globe was kept constantly burning. The rest of this recess served as a store for ship's lamps, oil cans, one bottle of rum, and a small keg of wine. The two remaining sides of the cabin held two bunks, broad enough for two people to lie heads and tails. It did not take long to make one fond of the little cabin, in spite of its strange variety of smells.

The weather was fine when we went on board about ten o'clock, hoping to get some sleep before

starting. But March is the very month for the stormy lord of Hadria to play some trick; and we felt, as an old Italian poet had sung, that "di doman' non c'è certezza."

II. TWO IDLE DAYS

Next morning the rain was dripping steadily on the deck. "That son of a dog, the scirocco," as the *paron* called it, had played us the trick we dreaded, and the weather was fairly broken. The regular patter of the reefs against the sails showed that the *Beppi* was anchored off Fort Alberoni, just at the mouth of the Malamocco port, only nine miles from Venice; that was all the way we had made. And it seemed probable that we should have to remain where we were throughout the day, for the Adriatic was thundering on the sea walls that keep the lagoon and Venice itself from being swept away. From the deck nothing could be seen, nothing but dense banks of sea fog, through which the roar of the sea sounded strange and unreal, for inside the shelter of the walls all the lagoon was grey and still. After breakfast was despatched, there was nothing to be done but to set about cooking the dinner. Our kitchen was a portable stove lashed to the bulwarks; with two holes for the fire and places for two pots. The *paron* was proud of his iron kitchen; hitherto he had carried a wooden one only; and it was always taking fire. Fourteen times had it set his cargo of wood in

a blaze; "but," he added contentedly, "I never lost it all."

"Polenta, castradina," said Antonio, announcing our bill of fare; and he was to cook it, for among his other accomplishments he numbered a skilled hand at *polenta*. The *castradina* (smoked mutton ham) was brought up and chopped into huge hunks; these were set to boil for two hours in the larger pot, to flavour the water. Then they were taken out and set aside to keep warm, while the yellow maize-flour and the salt were poured, slowly by handfuls, into the boiling water, and stirred round and round, as we make porridge. When the *polenta* had reached the proper consistency, the whole yellow mass was turned out on to a slab of wood, and the *paron* came with a piece of string and sliced it into the proper portions. Then the crew were summoned to dinner, from their cabin in the bows, to the cry of "Polenta! polenta! figlioli; polenta! cari tosi." And up scrambled the "dear boys" through their hatchway and settled around the *polenta* board—four wrinkled, weather-stained old men, all of them natives of Pelestrina. They had spent their whole lives in making voyages up and down the Adriatic, and knew every corner of the intricate Dalmatian coast. One of them, the oldest, Doro by name, was a character, and a constant source of amusement to the others. His face was like nothing human, so full was it of wrinkles; and an irresistibly humorous twinkle lurked in the

corners of his old eyes. He was seventy years of age, and had married three wives, a Chiozzotta, a Pelestrinotta, and a Veneziana; he was meditating a fourth, a Buranella, but had been advised that she was likely to make an end of him. And in this advice the others agreed at large. Doro possessed a wonderful repertory of adjurations; but his favourite was certainly "corpo di Diana di Dio." The crew were a little curious as to the presence of a stranger; after some discussion, however, he was summed up and settled to everybody's satisfaction, as "uno di quei che vanno contemplando il mondo" ("one of those who go about contemplating the world").

These Pelestrinotti are passionately fond of their home; and the mere sight of it, when they cannot reach it, is enough to send them into a frenzy. Yet here lay the *Beppi*, idle and in sight of Pelestrina. "A cà, a cà!" ("Home, home!") they kept on grumbling and muttering between their mouthfuls of *polenta*. And Paron Piero saw that he would have to let them go. Yet when they do get home they have no occupation. They lie in Homeric idleness before the fire, drinking coffee and smoking, while each one rambles along upon the lines of his own endless yarn, to which none of the others pays the smallest heed. "A cà, a cà!" they all shouted when dinner was done; and home they went, and left us to look after the *Beppi* by ourselves. On board, the afternoon

went lazily by. Antonio squatted in front of the fire that was cooking our supper, blew at it through a long cane pipe, like an Indian charming snakes. Then towards evening the wind changed. The scirocco still thundered on the outside walls. The breeze freshened; the mists lifted and drove away from the sunset, leaving the Euganean Hills purple and distinct across the green expanses of the windy lagoon. To seaward the heavy clouds lay piled, and warmed to rose in the sunset; while, far away, Venice sprang up clear and coldly grey upon the water.

Our sailors came on board again at midnight, and by dawn we were under way. The great blunt prows of the *Beppi* began to surge through the swell. Though the wind was fair there was still a considerable sea; and the fog had settled down over everything once more; so that two minutes after passing the end of the mole there was nothing to be seen, from the moist decks of the *trabaccolo*, but a hand's-breadth of cold grey rolling sea. A feeling of desolation began to lay its hand on one; a sense of having bidden adieu to everything. And now, out of the grey cloud in front of us came the first note of a fog-horn; melancholy and weird it sounded, and seemed to pervade the mist, nor was the ear sure of the quarter whence it came. Then another; and this time clearly on our weather bow. We answer from an old tin trumpet. There is a pause. Then suddenly, and with awful rapidity, a huge black mass looms out of the mist and

seems to tower towards us, the prow of a steamer lost in the fog and seeking the port. There is an instant of confusion and contradictory shouts, and, above all, the *paron's* louder and authoritative voice; then the huge mass fades silently away, blotted out as rapidly as it emerged, and the mournful note of its steam siren dies slowly down the wind. A faint gleam of watery sunshine glitters for an instant on the oily rollers; then the gloom and the mist settle over us once more. Even the breeze fails, and the *Beppi* begins to sway uneasily from side to side. We commend ourselves to the powers of patience, while the sailors begin a long expostulation with the wind.

"Supia, boja!" ("Blow, you hangman") says one, addressing the fog, throwing his words languidly overboard. "Fiol d'un can!" cries another. "Xè porca xè sta bava" ("It's a pig is this breeze"), cries the steersman, with a curious air of conviction; and all the others answer in ghostly chorus from the bows, "Sì, xè porca." This commination service being ended, with no good results, one old sailor suggests that they have been on the wrong tack; and naturally the wind does not like being sworn at. So he begins, "Ah! he is a noble is the *maestro*" (the wind they wanted); "he is a count and very noble indeed, if it would only please him to come; and he will come if you give him time." And when once started blessings flow as readily as curses. "Dai, dai cara bava, cara, cara" ("Blow, blow, dear breeze, you dear,

you dear"). But as little came of the one as of the other. The winds were deaf, and all day long there was nothing to be heard or seen but the roll and swell of the scirocco, the desolate chorus of the sailors, and the ceaseless patter of the reefs upon the empty sails.

III. THE ISTRIAN COAST

Midnight brought a breeze, and by sunrise the Istrian coast was in sight. The fog had cleared away ; the *Beppi* ploughed a noble furrow in the sea, dipping almost to the eyes in the sapphire flood. To the north the Alps were clear, from Antelao past Monte Cavallo to the peaks of Carniola beyond Trieste ; rosy snow against a pale blue sky ; a splendid close to the great water avenue of the Adriatic. In front lay the Istrian shore ; cloven by the small gulf of Queto, whither we were making. The whole coast was visible, from the point of Salvore, with its lighthouse column, to Rovigno ; line upon line of hills, each rising a little higher till they climbed to the crest of Monte Maggiore in the far background above Fiume. The scene recalled the coast of Greece. There was the same beauty of long-drawn lines and delicate declensions, unobtrusive in curve, yet delicious to the eye that follows them. The prevailing tones along the coast were the grey-green of the olive groves ; the colder grey of the limestone rock ; russet of the oak brakes that had not shed their last year's leaves ; and every

now and then a flood of clearer colour from a cluster of fruit trees that were coming into bloom. As the *Beppi* drew nearer, the little villages that cap each height grew more and more distinct, began to take shape, and their campanili shot up from their midst. Highest and clearest of all stood Buje; called "the spy of Istria," for it overlooks the whole land.

At Quieto the *Beppi* was to lie four days, to ship her cargo of faggots; and this was the time at our disposal for seeing the Istrian coast. So, after packing a knapsack and to a chorus of "Buon divertimentos" from the crew, we set out to "contemplate the world." Parenzo is the nearest town to Quieto. And the walk there was most delicious in the spring. The way lies over rolling downs covered with brushwood almost as thick and as odoriferous as the Corsican macquis. A guide is absolutely necessary to avoid being lost in the bush. The whole of this limestone country was breathing after a bounteous rain. The flowers seemed to burst their buds as we looked at them—violet, crocus, hellebore, aromatic shrubs, and fruit-tree blossom, all the chorus of a southern spring. The air was laden with intoxicating perfume: the lizards rustled through the undergrowth. The olive trees, hoary and arrowy as always, waved and shimmered across a glittering sea. The climate of Istria is much warmer than that of the corresponding shores of Italy: and Cassiodorus made no mistake when he praised its voluptuous and delicious airs, and compared it to

Baiae with no Avernus near at hand. The laughing sea, the olives, the lentisk, and the limestone down, recalled the setting of some Theocritean idyll. And most fittingly, the ancient ensign of Istria is the goat.

The country is Greek in character, but the towns remember another and more recent master. At the entrance to Parenzo, St. Mark's Lion meets you face to face; grimly regardant from a round Venetian tower. And the narrow streets of the town are full of Venetian balconies and windows. The splendid basilica of Bishop Eufrasius is a monument of an earlier period still, the time of the Byzantine dominion; while the ruins of the great temple to Neptune and Mars remind us that Parenzo was at one time the Roman "Municipium" Parentium, chief city in the colony Julia. This temple as it once stood, in all the perfection of its columned portico, crowning the promontory that overhangs the northern of the two bays on which the city is built, must have made a noble landmark for sailors out at sea. Nothing remains of the temple now but the stylobate and a ruined capital or two.

The buildings of Parenzo recall the history of the city step by step. And the history of Parenzo is that of most of the Istrian coast towns. They were Roman colonies first; then governed by the Emperors of the East. After the disturbances wrought by the Franks, Istria passed under the authority of elective governors, who soon made

themselves hereditary marquises. From the marquises it came to the hands of the Patriarch of Aquileia, and finally fell to the possession of Venice.

IV. POLA

Pola, at the extreme end of the peninsula, has always been the chief town of Istria. Its position confers this pre-eminence; it lies in the recess of a deep gulf, a land-locked sea, secure from storms; while behind, the country is barren and broken into gorges with abrupt sides, cloven through the limestone rock. Tradition says that in this bay the people of the Colchian king found a resting-place after their wanderings, when the pursuit of Jason and his stolen fleece had grown a hopeless quest. But the real history of Pola begins when it became a Roman colony in B.C. 181; and its connection with Rome is the feature most clearly stamped upon the town even to this day, in spite of Austrian barracks and arsenal and "Franz Josef" in gold letters everywhere. Augustus dismantled the town as its punishment for taking the republican side in the wars that followed on the death of Julius Cæsar. But he rebuilt it again under the name of Pietas Julia; and dedicated the exquisite little temple to Rome and to Augustus, which still stands perfect upon the piazza.

The most curious fact in Polan history is that this place witnessed the close of so many tragedies. Here

Constantine the Great ordered the execution of his own son Crispus, that "chaste, too chaste Bellerophon" of Roman story, on the false accusation of the Empress Fausta. And here, too, Gallus, the brother of Julian, died at the bidding of Constantius. Under Justinian, Pola was the capital of Istria and the seat of the governor, the master of the soldiery; and Belisarius used its harbour as a roadstead for his fleet. Later still, in A.D. 932, when Istria made a temporary submission to Venice, the Bishop of Pola signed the treaty after the Marquis of Istria, proving that Pola still ranked highest among Istrian sees. This early treaty was a warning of the fate which lay in store for Pola. Her great rival on the other side of the Adriatic awakened her jealousy; and in the wars between Genoa and Venice, Pola sided with the Genoese. This brought upon her the vengeance of the Venetians, and she passed into their power in 1331.

Few approaches are finer than the sea approach to Pola. The mouth of the bay is hidden by a promontory, crowned, as are all the neighbouring heights, by Austrian forts; and it is only as the vessel rounds the point that the bay opens up, with Pola lying at its further end. The attention is instantly caught by the great amphitheatre which stands at one side of the town; its arches, tier upon tier, spring up in perfect symmetry from the level of the shore. No monument of ancient Rome, not the aqueducts

of the Campagna, nor the baths of Caracalla, conveys a more impressive sense of the solid splendour of Roman architecture than does this arena at Pola; beside it the amphitheatre of Verona seems a dwarf, while the Colosseum is broken and ruined; but here the whole outer circle is complete; and the Istrian stone looks as clean as the day it was cut. Inside, it is true, the galleries have disappeared. But one does not feel their absence on first seeing the arena from the water. With the evening sunlight glowing over the creamy whiteness of the stone, the whole pile looked like the work of some magician, not fashioned by the hand of man; and it is easy to sympathise with the pride which the people of Pola feel in their treasure, and with their legend that it was built by the fairies in a single night. The Venetians at one time proposed to remove the amphitheatre bodily to the Lido at Venice. But the undertaking proved too costly, and both Pola and the Lido were spared the misfortune.

Pola is rich in Roman remains. But after the Temple of Augustus and the arena, only one other is especially worthy of being named. That is the little arch, miscalled the Porta Aurata. It was raised by the great Polan family of the Sergii in A.D. 99, and is an exquisite piece of Roman work, with delicate traceries finely cut and keen, thanks to the qualities of the Istrian stone. Indeed, at Pola the traveller finds the two things in which the country excels—

the creamy Istrian stone and the ruby Istrian wine. Francesco Redi sent his Bacchus wandering through Tuscany. But had he been a Venetian and not a Tuscan, he might have changed the scene to the Istrian coast; and there, rioting along the olive-shaded shores of some Istrian bay, the god of wine might well have found another Ariadne to translate to heaven.

After dinner and a due tribute to the Istrian wine, it is pleasant to stroll along the quay and look down the long and winding estuary, ruffled into tiny waves by the land breeze. The Austrian navy lies drawn up in one long line of ships, their sterns close against the quay. There were troopships coming and going; and the song of the soldiers, borne over the water, sent us to sleep that night.

V. POLA TO TRIESTE

In Istria nothing is worse than the railway, the solitary railway which it possesses. It was built for the convenience of the arsenal at Pola; and some doubt hangs over the hour at which a train will start, while no one knows at what hour it may arrive. One fact alone is certain, that the journey from Pola to Trieste by rail will not take less than thirteen hours. The traveller will probably choose to give up the railway for the little steamer which performs the journey to Trieste in eight hours. And the coast

is so interesting that he will not regret his choice. Each of the little Istrian towns has a character of its own; and a history, if one cares to study it. But one feature they all have in common: they are built upon promontories, boldly looking out to sea; their campanili serve as landmarks for miles around.

Immediately after leaving the harbour of Pola the steamer passes the Brionian Islands, where Genoa defeated Venice at the opening of the war of Chioggia. Then on to Rovigno, a flourishing and active little place, with a tobacco factory and a good trade in wine. It sends both cigars and wine to Manchester, where they find a ready market; but, we may be sure, under other names than that of Rovigno. After Rovigno comes the little hill city of Orsera with its square castle, once the palace of the Bishop of Parenzo, in the days when he rivalled his brother of Pola in power. Then Città Nova stands out on its headland, a picturesque town with its old Venetian battlements and ivy-draped walls. The women of Città Nova wear a striking costume; quantities of pure white linen are wrapped about the bust and throat, and the same is thrown over the head; but there it is starched and stands out stiff like an exaggerated Normandy cap. For the antiquarian there are the Roman inscriptions built into the walls of the Basilica of Città Nova, and for the architect there is the basilica itself.

After Città Nova the coast is flatter; and there are only two small villages, Daila and Umago, to be seen. But in the spring the monotony of line and of colour is relieved by perfect fountains of living pink and white, thrown up by the orchard trees. When once the headland of Salvore and the waters where Venice achieved one of her most memorable victories by defeating Otho, son of Frederick Barbarossa, have been reached, the prow turns towards Trieste, and the character of the coast changes. The bays become deeper and wider; the shores more precipitous; the hills behind rise higher and more abruptly. There is Pirano, with its ancient walls, perched high above the sea upon a tongue of land so thin that it must some day be eaten away by the waves that wash it on either side. Then comes Capo d'Istria, once Justinopolis, the see of Peter Paul Vergerius, the Italian martyr for Protestantism; and also the earliest home of the great Venetian family of Giustiniani. Then Trieste itself; its houses climbing high up the steep hillside. And further to the left the white and solitary castle of Miramar; a paradise of gardens, but saddened always by the memory of its unhappy owner, Maximilian of Mexico. Further away still, and high over all, the towering pinnacles of the Dolomitic Alps.

VI. HOME AGAIN

Our leave of absence was up, and we had to seek our *paron* once more in the harbour of Quieto. The *Beppi* lay deep in the water, with as much of her cargo above decks as below. The bundles of wood were all stowed with wonderful neatness, and reached a quarter of the way up the masts. They were planked over the top, forming what is called a *camito*, a sort of raised deck on which one could walk, and from which the business of the ship was conducted. With such a *camito* as we had on board—fifty thousand faggots of oak—a reef had to be taken in either sail. The breeze would not serve till evening, and there was nothing to be done but to turn into the little wine-shop overlooking the harbour and to drink through a series of parting glasses. The room was full of men who had been working at the loading of the *Beppi*; for this traffic in wood is the principal occupation of the natives of Quieto—wild and handsome-looking fellows playing and quarrelling over “Mora.”

The ethnography of the Istrians is so mixed and obscure, so many strains have had a share in making them, that it would be rash to say to what race these men belonged. They spoke Italian, for the most part, reverting to Slavonic only when they took to their ferocious-looking knives, which each one carried in his belt. “Brutta gente, popolo selvatico,”

Paron Piero called them. But whether savage in nature or no, they certainly possessed the savages' picturesqueness of gesture and speech. "Long life to you; and I hope to see you again; but that may hardly be," said one, raising a glass of wine. "And why not?" "No, no! the mountains stay, but man must pass," he answered, with an indescribable movement that embraced the distant hills and the parting strangers.

But we were not to get off without doing justice to the rival inn and to each variety of wine which the place possessed. This little wine-shop stood something very like a sack at the hands of its guests; and how the *padrone* kept an account is a miracle. Eggs were seized and set to roast in their shells among the logs upon the square and open hearth-stone; a barrel of sardines was forced and half emptied in a trice; everything that came to hand was devoured. Then came the bill and, at last, "Addio."

We walked along the shore while the *Beppi* was towed silently and slowly out to sea. By the water-side some women were working late, binding faggots with withs of green ginestra: the clever ones can finish as many as a thousand in a day. At the furthest point of the shore we had to wait for the *Beppi*. Out to sea the wide surface was all pure and liquid grey, while the moonlight made a broad and silvery path that seemed to lead to Venice, on the other shore. The *Beppi* stole stealthily nearer and nearer; her sails

and masts loomed black and large as she came abreast of us ; the *paron's* voice hailed us from the bows and a boat was sent to take us on board. Late into the balmy night we stood upon the poop, looking back to the Istrian shore, while the coast-line faded slowly away into the darkness.

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